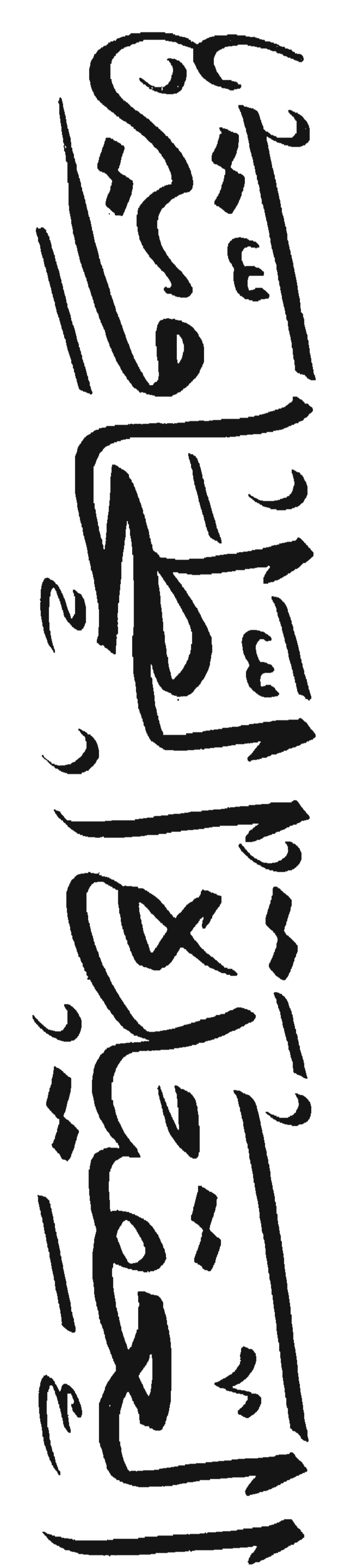
COMMENTARY
ON THE

CREED OF AṬ-ṬAḤĀWĪ
BY
IBN ABĪ AL -'IZZ

ARH AL -'AQIDAH AT - ṬAḤĀWIYȲAH

TRANSLATED BY
MUHAMMAD 'ABDUL-HAQQ ANSARI



KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry of Higher Education
Al-Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University
Deanery of Academic Research





COMMENTARY ON THE CREED OF AṬ-ṬAḤĀWĪ BY IBN ABĪ AL-'IZZ

SHARḤ AL-'AQIDAH AT-ṬAḤĀWIYYAH

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MUHAMMAD 'ABDUL-HAQQ ANSARI

AL-IMAM MUHAMMAD IBN SA'UD ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
THE COMPASSIONATE THE MERCIFUL

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INTRODUCTION

All praise and thanks belong to Allah, and may peace be upon His chosen servants.

The religion of Islam is characterized by and distinguished from all other religions by its many ordinances, rules and systems of life. The concept that comes in the forefront of these ordinances and systems is the Islamic creed (*'aqīdah*). This is from the viewpoint that belief is the fundamental principle for action and from it emanates the philosophy of life and the view of the creation and the Creator.

The Salaf (Pious Predecessors) of the nation of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings be upon him) have placed considerable emphasis on this concept on practical and theoretical grounds. Practically, the pure Islamic *'aqīdah* (creed), the one that is free from all superstition and innovation, far from false interpretation and denial, was their methodology of life and their guide to contemplation and thought. Theoretically, this Islamic *'aqīdah* received immense care and attention in its presentation and explanation, as well as in defense of its sacred domain, regardless of whether they did so by way of education, authorship, dialogue, or debate.

Among the valuable books on this subject is *The Creed of Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī* of Imām Abū Ja'far Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Al-Azdī Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321 A.H.). It is a very accurate and precise text for its small size. It includes the fundamental principles of belief and its most important issues. One scholar was destined for its explanation and presentation. He was 'Alī Ibn 'Alī Ibn Abī Al-'Izz Al-Dimashqī (d. 792 A.H.). His explanation is adequate and in an easy to understand language.

This book has obtained high stature at this University since the time it was founded. It has been the main reference book for the *'aqīdah* curriculum of university-level studies. In fact, even before that it had received special attention from the scholars and leaders of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. That is because it encompasses the true creed of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah and is the methodology upon which this country (may Allah fortify and honor it) has stood since its founding.

Therefore, due to the importance of this book and the immense need for it and its like, the University took on the task of translating it into English in hopes that those who speak English

may benefit from it. The task of this translation was entrusted to a qualified professor who is fluent in both Arabic and English, Dr. Muḥammad 'Abdul-Ḥaqq Anṣārī, researcher in the Deanery of Academic Research. Dr. Muḥammad took on this task and put forth an effort to be thanked, and one deserving of our prayers and praise.

Then the University entrusted the printing and publication of this book, including review and editing by various specialists, to the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences in America, a branch of the University. The director and those with him at the Institute have put forth constant efforts to publish this book and we thank them for that.

I ask Allah to make this work a benefit and source of good for the nation of Muḥammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Allah is the Giver of success.

Dr. Muhammad Ibn Sa'ad Al-Salem , Rector ,
Al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd Islamic University

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

This work is important for two reasons. One, the *Creed* which is commented upon here is most probably the first authentic statement of faith that we possess of the Ahl as-Sunnah as understood and practiced by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150/767) and his disciples. It was written by a great and distinguished scholar of *fiqh*, as well as no less a distinguished scholar of ḥadīth, Imām Abū Ja'far Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933) who was ranked as a *mujtahid* in Ḥanafī *fiqh* and held to be the leader of the Ḥanafī jurists in Egypt. Abū Ḥanīfah has long been credited with writing a creed, *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, and dictating a testament, *Al-Waṣīyyah*, on the subject of belief. But it is now generally accepted that he was not the author of those two works; rather, those works were composed in later days by unknown authors belonging to his school.[1] Another work of creed is attributed to Abū Ḥanīfah's student, Imām Muḥammad Ash-Shaybānī (d. 189/804), but its authenticity is even more doubtful.[2]

The only other credal statement which may be compared with this *Creed* is the *Ibānah* by Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's illustrious contemporary Abū Al-Ḥassan 'Alī Al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935). Whether this work was written by Al-Ash'arī in the early years of his career when he broke with the Mu'tazilah or at the end of his career, and whether some parts were written by him at all has been controversial.[3] Whatever may be the case, it cannot be said that it was written earlier than the *Creed* of Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī. There is much that is common between the two creeds, but they do differ on certain issues. A close look will also reveal that Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's *Creed* is more comprehensive and elaborate than the *Creed* of Al-Ash'arī. Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), another contemporary of Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī (although a younger one), who developed Ḥanafī *kalām* in Central Asia, is also listed as

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[1] For a discussion of these writings, see A. J. Wensinck, *Muslim Creed* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1965), pp. 102-124; Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, *Abū Ḥanīfah: Ḥayatuhu wa Asruhu wa Arā'uhu wa Fiqhuhu* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1947), pp. 168-183.

[2] See Fūwād Sezgin, *Tārīkh at-Turāth al-'Arabī* (Arabic translation of *Geschichte Des Arabisches Schrifttums*) (Lieden: Brill, 1967 and Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd Islamic Univ., 1403/1983), vol. I, part III, p. 73.

[3] See Richard J. McCarthy, S.J., *The Theology of Al-Ash'arī* (Beirut: 1953), pp. 231-2; 'Abdur-Raḥmān Badawī, *Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Malayin, 1971), pp. 515-518.

having written a *Creed* (*'aqīdah*) which is still unpublished. It appears, however, that his *Creed* did not become popular; only one scholar, Tāj ad-Dīn As-Subkī (d. 771/1370) is recorded as having commented upon it.[4] Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's *Creed*, on the other hand, enjoyed great popularity. Some fifteen scholars from different periods of time and different parts of the Islamic world, as we shall see, have written small or large commentaries on it.

The second important feature of this work is the approach of the commentator. Although he was brought up and educated in a Ḥanafī family, worked as a Ḥanafī judge (*qāḍī*), and was fully aware of later developments in Ḥanafī *kalām*, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz abhorred the *kalāmī* method which almost all the other commentators on the *Creed* followed. Instead, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz pursued the Salafī method, particularly as it was developed by Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyyah (d. 728/326) and his disciple, Ibn Al-Qayyīm (d. 751/1350). At places in his commentary, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz dissociates himself from Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), as well as from later Ḥanafī theologians, and adopts the views of the *ḥadīth* scholars and he defends them as well. On many occasions he quotes from *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar* to show that he has Abū Ḥanīfah, if not later Ḥanafīs, on his side. At times, where Abū Ḥanīfah's views differ from the views of the ḥadīth scholars, such as, for example, on the question of *īmān*, he states both views and painstakingly shows that the difference between them is not substantial. The commentary may therefore be taken as both a Ḥanafī and a Salafī exposition of the Islamic faith; Ḥanafī in the sense of early Ḥanafism, and Salafī in the sense that it was developed by Ibn Taymīyyah and his school.

In the following pages I will discuss the life and work of the author and those of the commentator. I shall make a few observations on the text and elucidate some features of the method that the commentator follows. I will also underline some ideas of the commentary. Finally, I will conclude this section with a few words regarding the translation and the notes that I have added throughout the work.

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[4] See Fūwād Sezgin, *Tārīkh at-Turāth al-'Arabī*, vol. I, part IV, p. 42.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's Life and Work

Abū Ja'far Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Salāmah Ibn 'Abdul-Mālik Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī[5] was born on Rabī' al-Awwal 11, 239 A.H./ August 9, 853 C.E., in Ṭaḥa, a town in Upper Egypt, to an Arab family from the Hajr branch of the Qaḥṭānī tribe of Azd. His father was a *ḥadīth* and literature scholar. His mother, too, was learned. Both his parents used to attend the lectures of Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820). Abū Ja'far first learned from the members of his family and then he attended the classes of Abū Zakarīyyā Ibn Muḥammad on the Qur'ān in the mosque of 'Amr Ibn Al-'Āṣ. At that time, he memorized the entire Qur'ān.

Abū Ja'far received his first lessons in *ḥadīth* from his father. After that, he pursued the study of *ḥadīth* from his maternal uncle, Ismā'īl Ibn Yaḥyā Al-Muzanī (d. 264/877), an eminent disciple of Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī. By the time he was thirteen he had finished Ash-Shāfi'ī's *Musnad*. This was, however, only a beginning. Abū Ja'far continued his study of *ḥadīth*. He made it a point to meet every scholar that went to Egypt from any part of the Islamic world and he learned the *ḥadīth* that they taught. This is testified to by the list of

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[5] For Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's life and works, see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, ed. by Dr. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣadir, 1398/1978), vol. I, pp. 71-72; Aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wafī bi al-Wafayāt* (Wiesbaden, 1971), vol. 8, p. 9; Adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'*, ed. by Shu'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ and Ḥussayn Al-Asad (Beirut: Mu'assasat ar-Risālah, 1401/1981), vol. 15, pp. 27-33; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, (Hyderabad, 1329 A.H.), vol. I, pp. 274-282; Al-Qarshī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍi'ah*, ed. by 'Abdul-Fattāḥ Al-Ḥilwa (Cairo: 'Īsā Al-Ḥalabī, 1398,1978), vol. I, pp. 271-277; Abū Isḥāq Ash-Shīrāzī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā'*, ed. by Ihsān 'Abbās (Beirut, 1978), p. 142; Ibn An-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist* (Cairo: Al-Maktabah at-Tajārīyyah, 1348 A.H.), p. 292; Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* (Cairo: Maṭba'at as-Sa'ādah), vol. 11, p. 174; Ibn Al-'Imad, *Shadharat ad-Dhahāb* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Qudsī, 1350 A.H.), vol. IĪ, p. 288; Al-Yafi'ī, *Mir'at al-Jinan* (Hyderabad, 1337), vol. I, p. 281; Hajī Khalīfah, *Kashf aẓ-Ẓunūn* (Istanbul, 1362/1943), vol. II, p. 143; Ibn Al-Jawzī, *Muntazam* (Hyderabad, 1357 A.H.), vol. 6, p. 250; As-Sam'anī, *Al-Anṣab*, ed. by M. Al-'Awwamah (Beirut: n.d.), vol. 8, p. 218; Ibn Al-Athīr, *Al-Lubab* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Qudsī, 1367-59 A.H.), vol. II, p. 276; Ad-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyyah, 1403/1983), vol. I, p. 74; As-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Huffaẓ*, ed. by 'Alī M. 'Umar (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1393/1973), p. 337; Ismā'īl Basha, *Hadyat al-'Arifin* (Istanbul, 1951); Tash Kubrī Zadah, *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā'* (Al-Musal: Mataba'at az-Zahrah, 1961), 2nd edition, p. 58); Sh. M. Zāhid Al-Kawtharī, *Al-Ḥawī fi Sīrat al-Imām Abī Ja'far Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī* (Cairo: Al-Anwar Press, 1368 A.H.).

the teachers of *ḥadīth* that he mentions in his works. They come from Syria, Basrah, Kufah, the Hijaz, Yemen, Khurasan in the East and Morocco in the West. The list includes such renowned scholars as Al-Hāfiẓ Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān Aḥmad Ibn Shū'ayb An-Nasā'ī (d. 303/915), Abū Zur'ah 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Amr Ad-Dimashqī (d. 281/894), 'Alī Ibn 'Abdul-'Azīz Al-Baghawī (d. 280/893), and Abū Bishr Muḥammad Ibn Sa'īd Ad-Dūlabī (d. 310/922). Among his students who narrated *aḥādīth* from him, on the other hand, are such outstanding scholars of *ḥadīth* as Al-Hāfiẓ Abū Al-Qāsim Sulaymān Ibn Aḥmad Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) and the great critic of *ḥadīth*, Abū Aḥmad 'Abdullah Ibn 'Adīy (d. 365/975).

Abū Ja'far was brought up in a Shāfi'ī family. His first teacher of *fiqh* was no less than Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī's great disciple Al-Muzanī, about whose juristic ability the imām had a very high opinion and whom he called the defender of his school.[6] Abū Ja'far studied Al-Muzanī's famous *Mukhtaṣar*, the first compendium of Shāfi'ī *fiqh*, with Al-Muzanī himself. He did not, however, limit himself to just that school; he also attended lectures on Ḥanafī *fiqh*, which were held at the Mosque of 'Amr Ibn Al-'Āṣ and he studied Ḥanafī works, a number of which his uncle had in his library and to which he often referred.[7]

Abū Ja'far's interest in Ḥanafī *fiqh* kept growing. The process was accelerated when he came into contact with two Ḥanafī judges of Egypt, Bakkar Ibn Qutaybah (d. 270/833) and Aḥmad Ibn Abī 'Imrān Al-Baghdādī (d. 280/893).[8] With these two, he increased his study of Ḥanafī *fiqh*. He once said, "At first I used to write *ḥadīth* from Al-Muzanī and follow the views of Ash-Shāfi'ī. But after some time, when Aḥmad Ibn Abī 'Imrān came and took over as judge of Egypt, I kept company with him and followed his opinions."[9]

Most probably it was at that time that his uncle called him aside and rebuked him for not having produced anything worthwhile up to that time. Abū Ja'far got angry at this and broke off from him. Later, when he wrote his *Mukhtaṣar* in Ḥanafī *fiqh* on the lines of

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[6] Az-Zarkalī, *Al-A'lām* (Beirut: Dār al-Malāyīn, 1980), vol. I, p. 329.

[7] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, vol. 1, p. 72; Al-Yafi'ī, *Mir'at al-Jinān*, op cit., vol. I, p. 281.

[8] Adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'*, vol. 15, p. 27; Al-Qarshī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍi'ah*, vol. I, p. 272.

[9] Adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'*, vol. 15, p. 30.

Al-Muzani's *Mukhtasar* in Shāfi'ī *fiqh*, he said that had his uncle been alive he would have regretted his earlier remarks.[10]

It is not unlikely that, due to his contacts with the judges of Egypt, Abū Ja'far had access to court papers. In 268/881 it happened that he objected to a court order and sent his observations on it to the governor, Ibn Ṭūlūn, who sent him to Syria to inquire into the matter. In Syria, he came into contact with the famous Ḥanafī judge, Abū Ḥāzim 'Abdul-Ḥamīd (d. 292/904), a disciple of a disciple of Abū Ḥanīfah's great student, Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥassan Ash-Shaybānī (d. 189/804). He went even deeper into Ḥanafī *fiqh* with this judge. During the year and a half that he spent in Syria, he visited Gaza, Ashkelon, Tiberias and Jerusalem.

When Abū Ja'far returned to Egypt, Judge Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdah appointed him his secretary. Many times, when the judge was absent, Abū Ja'far worked as his deputy. In 292/904, he was given the coveted post of "witness before the judge".[11] He held that post until his death in 321/933. He was put to rest in the graveyard of Banū Ash'ath Al-Qurayfah.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī was first and foremost a jurist, but he also an equally eminent scholar of *ḥadīth*. A number of writers have spoken of his erudition and scholarship. Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1371) wrote, "He was a most reliable and correct narrator of *ḥadīth* and one of the great scholars of *ḥadīth* (*al-huffāẓ al-jahābidhah*)."[12] Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1440) quoted the remark of the famous Spanish scholar, Maslāmah Ibn Qāsim, "He was a reliable narrator, a great scholar, a famous jurist, very knowledgeable concerning the controversies of the jurists, and a man of keen insight."[13] Adh-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) wrote, "He was the *muḥaddith* and *faqīh* of Egypt, equally distinguished in *ḥadīth* and in *fiqh*.. Whoever reads the works of this *imām* is sure to acknowledge his erudition and width of vision."[14] Abū Isḥāq Ash-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1083) remarked, "The leadership of Ḥanafī *fiqh* in Egypt undoubtedly goes to him."[15]

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[10] Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah*, vol. Iī, p. 174; al-Yafi'ī, *Mir'at al-Jinan*, vol. I, p. 281.

[11] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, vol. I, p. 72.

[12] Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah*, op cit., vol. II, p. 174.

[13] Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, (Hyderabad, 1329 A.H.; reprint Beirut, 1390/1971), vol. I, p. 276.

[14] Adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'*, vol. 15, pp. 29-30.

[15] Abū Isḥāq Ash-Shirāzī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā'*, p. 142.

Regarding his position in the Ḥanafī school, Ṭash Kubrī Zādah (d. 968/1561) observed, "He was an *imām* and *mujtahid* in the category of the *mujtahidūn fī al-masā'il*."[16] And As-Sam'ānī (d. 562/1167) noted, "Without a doubt, he was an *imām* [in *fiqh*], reliable and trustworthy [in *ḥadīth*] and no one came after him who could rise to his level in *fiqh* and scholarship."[17]

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's first work on *ḥadīth*, *Sharḥ Ma'ānī al-Athar*, is a unique work. It discusses different views on one subject, points out their merits and flaws, and defends the view which he prefers. It is extremely helpful for getting insight into *fiqh*. Three scholars, the great commentator of Al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Al-Badar Al-'Aynī (d. 855/1451), the famous Mālikī scholar, Ibn 'Abdul-Barr (d. 463/1071) and the renowned Ḥanafī scholar, Jamāl ad-Dīn Az-Zaylā'ī (d. 762/1361), have commented on the work. In his second work, Sharḥ Mushkil al-Athar, Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī highlights those facets of *ḥadīth* which are not normally noticed by common people. The famous Mālikī jurist and philosopher, Ibn Rushd (d. 598/1198) abridged the work. Two other scholars, Abū Al-Walīd Sulaymān Ibn Khalaf Al-Bājī (d. 474/1031) and *Qāḍī al-Quḍāt* Jamāl ad-Dīn Mūsā Al-Mālikī[18] (d. 803/1460), produced abridged editions. In his *Sunan* Ash-Shāfi'ī, Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī collected the *aḥādīth* which he heard from his uncle, Al-Muzanī. This work was published in Cairo (1315/1877) as well as in Beirut (1406/1985). *At-Taswīyyah bayn Haddathanā wa Akhbaranā* is another work listed in his writings on *ḥadīth*.

Most of Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's writings were in the field of *fiqh*. We have already referred to his *Mukhtasar*. It is the first compendium of *fiqh* written according to the Ḥanafī school. It was edited by Abū Al-Wafā Al-Afghānī and published by Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabīyyah in Cairo (1370/1950). Another work, *Ash-Shurūṭ as-Saghīr*, which deals with the rules of trade, wages, pre-emption, endowments and charity, has been published in Baghdad (1394/1974) in two volumes. A part of a larger work of his, *Ash-Shurūṭ al-Kabīr*, has been published by Joseph Schacht in Heidelberg (1346/1927) under the title *Kitāb Adhkār al-Ḥuqūq wa al-Ruhūn*. A facsimile edition of a much more important work, *Ikhtilāf al-Fūqahā'*, was first produced by Fredrick Cohn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyyah,

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[16] Tash Kubrī Zādah, *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā'*, p. 58.

[17] As-Sam'ānī, *Al-Ansāb*, vol. 8, p. 218.

[18] See Muḥammad Saghīr Ḥassan Ma'sumī, op cit., p. 39.

1320/1902), and later by Dr. Ṣaghīr Ḥassan Masūmī, published it in Islamabad (Institute of Islamic Studies, 1391/1971) with a detailed introduction. The authors of *Al-Fihrist* and *Al-Juwāhir al-Muḍi'ah* have mentioned many other writings of Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī in *fiqh*. The reader may refer to these two works.[19]

Al-'Aqīdah Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwīyyah

This work has been referred to by the following names in different manuscripts: (1) *Risālah fī Uṣūl ad-Dīn*, (2) *'Aqīdah Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, (3) *Bayn as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, and (4) *Bayn as-Sunnah wa Rijāb*.[20] (This last title seems to be a misspelling). It was first published with the third title in Aleppo in 1344/1925. The same title was put on the commentary on the creed by 'Abdul-Ghanī Al-Maydanī that was published by Muḥammad Muṭi' Al-Hāfiẓ and Muḥammad Riyaḍ Al-Maliḥ from Maktabat An-Nūrī, Damascus (1390/1970). Under the second title it was published in Riyadh (without mention of its date) with notes by Muḥammad Ibn Mani' and by Al-Maktab al-Islāmī in Beirut (1397 A.H.).

Commentaries on the *'Aqīdah*

A number of commentators, beginning in the 7th Century Hijrī and continuing until the last century, have written on the *'Aqīdah*. The following is a list of the commentators that were mentioned by Dr. Fūwād Sezgin in his *Tārīkh at Turāth al-'Arabī:*

1) Ismā'īl Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Aḥmad Ash-Shaybānī[21] (504/1110-629/1231), a Ḥanafī jurist commonly known as Ibn Muṣalī. He was born in Baṣrah and at times acted as the deputy to the judge in Damascus.

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[19] Ibn An-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 292; Al-Qarshī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍi'ah*, vol. I, pp. 275-77.

[20] See Brockelman, *Geschichte der Arabisches Litteratur* (Leiden, 1937-49), vol. I, pp. 293-94.

[21] For more about Ismā'īl Ash-Shaybānī, see Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah*, vol. 13, p. 136; Al-Qarshī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍi'ah*, vol. I, p. 144; Ibn Al-'Imād, *Shadharāt ad-Dhahab*, vol. 5, pp. 129f; Abū Al-Fatḥ Al-Yaninī, *Mir'at az-Zaman* (Hyderabad, 1380/1960), vol. 8, p. 674.

2) Najm ad-Dīn Manjubars[22] (d. 652/1254), a Turkish jurist. His commentary bears the title *An-Nūr al-Lami' wa al-Burhān as-Sāṭi'*. A copy of it, penned in 714 A.H., consists of 75 folios.

3) Hibatullah Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Mu'allā[23] (d. 732/1331), a Ḥanafī jurist and *uṣūlī* from At-Tiraz in Turkistan. His commentary is in 149 folios and is detailed.

4) Maḥmūd Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Mas'ūd Al-Qunāwī[24] (d. 771/1369), a jurist and *mutakallim* from Damascus, commonly known as Ibn As-Sarrāj. His commentary is entitled *Al-Qalā'id fī Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id*. It was published in 1311 A.H. in Qazan.

5) Sirāj ad-Dīn 'Umar Ibn Isḥāq Al-Marghinānī[25] (d. 773/1372), a renowned Ḥanafī scholar and a prolific writer. He added a detailed introduction and an epilogue to his commentary.

6) Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Maḥmūd Akmal ad-Dīn Al-Babartī[26] (d. 786/1384), a staunch defender of Ḥanafī views, and a contemporary to our commentator Ibn Abī Al-'Izz. The latter criticized some of his views in his book *Al-ttibā'*.

7) Ṣadr ad-Dīn Ibn Abī Al-'Izz (d. 792/1390), our commentator, whose works have been translated here. We will discuss him in more detail later.

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[22] For more about Najm ad-Dīn Manjubars, see Ismā'īl Basha, *Hadayat al-Arifin*, vol. 1, p. 233.

[23] For more about Hibatullah, see Al-Qarshī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍi'ah*, vol. II, pp. 204f.

[24] For more on Maḥmūd Al-Qunāwī, see Al-Qarshī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍi'ah*, vol. II, pp. 156f; Ibn Ḥajar, *Ad-Durar al-Kaminah* (Hyderabad, 1360/1931), vol. IV, pp. 322f; Ibn *Ṭūlūn*, *Qudat Dimishq*, ed. by Ṣalāh ad-Dīn Al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1956), p. 200.

[25] For more on Sirāj ad-Dīn 'Umar Al-Marghinānī, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Ad-Durar al-Kāminah*, vol. III, pp. 154ff; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *An-Nujūm az-Zahirah* (Cairo, 1383/1969), vol. II, pp. 120f; Ibn Al-'Imad, *Shadharāt ad-Dhahab*, vol. 6, pp. 228f; As-Suyūṭi, *Ḥusn al-Muhāḍarah*, ed. by M. Abū Al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Al-Ḥalabī, 1387/1967), vol. I, p. 268; Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Ash-Shawkānī, Al-Badr at-Tali' (Cairo: Maṭba*'at as-Sa'ādah*, 1348/1929), vol. 1, p. 505.

[26] For more on Muḥammad Al-Babartī, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Anbā al-Ghumar bi Abna' al-'Umar* (Hyderabad, 1388/1968), vol. III, pp. 179ff; Ibn Ḥajar, *Ad-Durar al-Kāminah*, vol. IV, pp. 250f; Ibn Al-'Imad, *Shadharat ad-Dhahab*, vol. VI, pp, 293f; Jalāl ad-Dīn As-Suyūṭi, *Bughyat al-Wu'at*, ed. by Abū Al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Al-Ḥalabī, 1384/1964), vol. I, p. 239.

8) Kafī Ḥassan Afandī Al-Iqhisārī[27] (d. 1025/1616). He completed his commentary in 1014 A.H. and gave it the name *Nūr al-Yaqīn fī Uṣūl ad-Dīn*.

9, 10, 11, 12) Four more commentaries have been noted by Dr. Sezgin but it is not known who wrote them.

Three more writers, not mentioned by Dr. Sezgin, also commented on the *'Aqīdah*:

13) Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr Al-Ghazzī,[28] commonly known as Ibn Bint Al-Ḥimyarī, a disciple of Ḥāfiẓ As-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497), wrote a short commentary in 881 A.H. A copy of this work is preserved in Al-Ajirīyyah Library in Damascus.

14) Abū 'Abdullah Maḥmūd Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Abī Isḥāq[29] (d. 916/1510), a Ḥanafī jurist from Constantinople. According to the author of *Kashf aẓ-Ẓunūn*, he completed his commentary in 916 A.H.

15) And, finally, 'Abdul-Ghanī Ibn Ṭālib Ibn Ḥammādah Al-Ghanimī Al-Maydanī[30] (d. 1298/1881), a Ḥanafī scholar and writer, he composed a commentary which has been edited by Muḥammad Muṭi' Al-Hāfiẓ and Muḥammad Riyad Al-Maliḥ and published by Maktabah an-Nūrī (Damascus) in 1390/1970. The editors based their editions on three manuscripts, one written in 1295 A.H., another in 1258 A.H., two years after the composition of the work, and a third written in 1340 A.H. The editors have also compared the text of the *'Aqīdah* with a manuscript penned in 732/1331.

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[27] For more on Kafī Ḥassan Al-Iqhisārī, see Ḥajī Khalīfah, *Kashf aẓ-Ẓunūn*, pp. 113f, 1002, 1143 and 1802; Ismā'īl Bāsha, *Hadyat al-'Ārifīn*, vol. 1, pp. 291f; 'Umar Al-Kaḥalah, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn* (Beirut: Dār Iḥya at-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 233; Az-Zarkalī, *Al-'Alām*, vol. II, p. 194.

[28] See 'Abdullah At-Turkī and Shu'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ, eds., *Sharḥ· al-'Aqīdah Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwīyyah* (Beirut: Mu'assasat ar-Risālah, 1408/1987), vol. 1, p. 50.

[29] Hajī Khalīfah, *Kashf aẓ-Ẓunūn*, p. 1143.

[30] For more on 'Abdul-Ghanī Al-Maydānī, see 'Abdul-Razzāq Al-Bayṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar fī Tārīkh al-Qarn ath-Thālith* 'Ashar, ed. by M. Bahjat Al-Bayṭār (Damascus: Al-Majma' al-Islāmī al-'Arabī, 1382/1963), vol. II, p. 867; Muḥammad Jamīl Ash-Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar fī A'yān Dimishq fī al-Qarn at-Thalith 'Ashar* (Damascus: Dār al-Yaqzah al-'Arabīyyah li at-Talīf wa an-Nashr, 1365/9145), p. 152; Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād* (Damascus: Al-Majma' al-Islāmī al-'Arabī, 1370/1950), p. 5.

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz's Life and Work

The name of our commentator is Ṣadr ad-Dīn Abū Al-Ḥassan 'Alī Ibn 'Alā ad-Dīn 'Alī Ibn Shams ad-Dīn Abī 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn Sharf ad-Dīn Abī Al-Barakāt Muḥammad Ibn 'Izz ad-Dīn Abī Al-'Izz Ṣāliḥ, commonly known as Ibn Abī Al-'Izz.[31] Originally his family lived in Adhru'at, today called Dir'a, some seventy miles south of Damascus. From there they moved to Damascus, where the commentator's great grandfather, Muḥammad Ibn Abī Al-'Izz was born in 645/1249.

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz's father, 'Alā ad-Dīn (d. 946/1345), was a scholar of Ḥanafī *fiqh*. He delivered sermons at the Mosque of Al-Afrām, taught at the school of Mu'azzamīyyah, and served as a judge assisting the chief judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) 'Imad ad-Dīn At-Ṭarṭusī. His grandfather, Shams ad-Dīn (d. 722/1322) was a very distinguished Ḥanafī jurist and served as chief judge. And his great grandfather, Muḥammad Ibn Abī Al-'Izz, taught at the school of Al-Murshidīyyah. His uncle, Ṣadr ad-Dīn Sulaymān Ibn Abī Al-'Izz (d. 677/1278), was also a great Ḥanafī scholar and writer, and served as chief judge in Syria and Egypt. Sulaymān's descendants also distinguished themselves as judges, muftis and professors.

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz was born into this distinguished family of scholars and judges on Dhul-Ḥijjah 22, 731 A.H./September 25, 1331 C.E. Naturally, he had learned first from his family and seems to have completed his studies with them at an early age. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah said that he started teaching at Qīmāzīyyah School at the age of seventeen in the year 748. This school had been built by Ṣarim ad-Dīn Qā'imaz, one of the descendants of Ṣalāh ad-Dīn Al-Ayyūbī, for teaching Ḥanafī *fiqh*. In 771/1369, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz moved to the Ruknīyyah School, which was founded in 621 A.H. by Amīr Rukn ad-Dīn Mankūras. In 784/1382, he started teaching at

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[31] For more on Ibn Abī Al-'Izz, see Taqi ad-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*, ed. by 'Adnān Durwaysh (Damascus, 1977), vol. I, pp. 22, 82-91, 105, 139, 271 and 358-359; Ibn Ḥajar, *Anbā' al-Ghumar*, vol. II, pp. 95-98 and vol. III, p. 50; Ibn Taghrī, *Ad-Dalīl ash-Shāfī' 'alā al-Manhal aṣ-Ṣāfī*, ed. by Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, n.d.), vol, I, p. 465; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Quḍāt Dimishq*, p. 201; As-Suyūṭi, *Ḥusn al-Muhāḍarat*, vol. II, p. 185; Ibn Al-'Imad, *Shadharat ad-Dhahab*, vol. VI, p. 326; Ismā'īl Bāsha, *Hadyat al-'Ārifīn* (Istanbul, 1955), vol. I, p. 726; Ḥajī Khalīfah, *Kashf aẓ-Ẓunūn*, p. 1143.

the 'Izzīyyah School, founded by Abū Al-Faḍl 'Izz ad-Dīn Aybak (d. 645/1249), replacing Qāḍī Al-Hammām after the qāḍi's death.

Along with teaching, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz also delivered sermons at the Afram Mosque (west of As-Ṣāliḥīyyah) founded by Amīr Jamāl ad-Dīn Aqush Al-Afram in 720/1320, as well as at Al-Ḥusbān. Towards the end of 776/1374, he was appointed judge in Damascus in place of Qāḍī Najm ad-Dīn, his cousin, upon the latter's transfer to Egypt. But Najm ad-Dīn resigned three months later and returned to his previous post in Damascus. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz then took over as judge in Egypt, but he also resigned from that post after just two months. Upon returning to Damascus, he resumed teaching at Qīmāzīyyah and also took classes at the Jawharīyyah School.

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz was born and bred in a family of Ḥanafī scholars and judges. All of the schools wherein he taught were dedicated to the teaching of Ḥanafī *fiqh*, and the judgeship he served was also that of a Ḥanafī judge. Despite all of that, he was not a blind follower of the Ḥanafī school; in fact, he was opposed to following one *imām* exclusively or defending the views of one school uncritically. Absolute faith and obedience, he said, is due to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be on him). No one is above criticism; everyone's views are to be examined based on the criteria of the Qur'ān and Sunnah; if they agree with them, they should be accepted; if they disagree, they are to be rejected. This is the burden of one of his tracts, *Al-Ittibā'*. In it, he reviewed a letter which a contemporary Ḥanafī scholar, Akmal ad-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Maḥmūd (d. 786/1384) had written, in which he had pleaded for the exclusive following of the Ḥanafī school. Besides objecting, in principle, to this point of view, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz also noted his observations on various issues which the author discussed. He concluded his discussion by saying:

> The correct course for a student is to memorize Allah's Book and ponder it. Similarly, he should memorize the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him), as much as he can, and reflect upon them. Furthermore, he should learn Arabic and grammar to the extent that he can express himself correctly and understand the Qur'ān and Sunnah well as also the writings of the Salaf. After this, he should study the views of different scholars, starting with the Companions and then those who came after them, without making any discrimination between them. When they agree on a point, he should stick to it; but

> when they differ, he should study all the views with an open mind and examine their arguments. Whoever Allah guides is on the right path and whoever He leaves wandering cannot see the light.[32]

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz was very critical of the practice of establishing schools and colleges and dedicating them to the study of a particular school of *fiqh*. It then became the duty of the teachers, he observed, to defend each and every view of that school. The students, too, developed the same attitude and bias. Unfortunately, most of the donors whose contributions led to the establishment of those schools had little knowledge and would explicitly leave conditions in their wills or deeds that would restrict the free exercise of intellect and open pursuit of knowledge. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz was of the opinion that such conditions should not be honored[33] since they violate the spirit of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. It was against some similar conditions that the Prophet (peace be on him) once said, "What has happened to the people that they come up with conditions that are not mentioned in the Book of Allah! Know that all the conditions not found in the Book of Allah, even if they be a hundred conditions, are absolutely null and void."[34] Ibn Abī Al-'Izz also denounced the practice that restricted judges to making rulings only according to a particular *fiqh*. The tradition, too, of appointing four *imāms*, one from each school of *fiqh*, to lead the prayer in the House of Allah at Makkah, he stated, should be discontinued. There should be, he argued, one *imām*, and everyone, irrespective of the *fiqh* school he followed, should pray behind him.[35]

Damascus in Ibn Abī Al-'Izz's time resounded with the ideas which Ibn Taymīyyah (d. 728/1328) had expounded a few decades earlier and which his great disciples, like Muḥammad Ibn 'Uthmān Adh-Dhahabī (d. 738/1337), Ibn Al-Qayyīm (d. 751/1350) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1372) had elaborated and defended. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz was deeply influenced by this great upsurge of Salafī thought. This is clear from many things, from the terms he used in his commentary, the concepts he elaborated upon, the method he followed and the scholars he quoted from. Most of the scholars he

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[32] Ibn Abī Al-'Izz, *Al-Ittibā'* (Lahore: Al-Maktabah as-Salafīyyah, 1401 A.H.), p. 72.

[33] Ibid., pp. 73f.

[34] This is part of a *ḥadīth* found in Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, nos. 2168, 2560, 2561 and 2563; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, Vol. 6, pp. 82, 183 and 213.

[35] Ibn Abī Al-'Izz, *Al-Ittibā'*. pp. 74f.

quoted from belonged to this school. (We will discuss this point in greater detail later.)

In the year 784/1382, 'Alī Ibn Aybak[36] (d. 801/1398-9), a regular poet of Damascus, wrote an ode in praise of the Prophet (peace be on him) in the same meter in which the famous ode "*Bānat Su'ād...*" was written by Ka'b Ibn Zuhayr. It was a beautiful poem and received general appreciation. It happened that Ibn Abī Al-'Izz read it and wrote a letter to the poet stating his appreciation of the literary aspect of the ode. In a separate paper, however, he also noted down his remarks about some of its ideas. Some people objected to this note and raised their voices against Ibn Abī Al-'Izz. Ibn Aybak referred the note to some jurists who objected to Ibn Abī Al-'Izz's remarks. The case was brought to the Sultan, who formed a council of scholars and jurists belonging to the different schools and asked for their opinion. The council held many sessions during which it questioned Ibn Abī Al-'Izz and discussed the issue at length. At the end of the fifth session, the council, led by a Shāfi'ī judge, convicted Ibn Abī Al-'Izz for his views, consigned him to jail, removed him from his post, and fined him. The fine was later withdrawn but he had to spend fourteen months in jail.[37]

In all there were eight issues on which Ibn Abī Al-'Izz was convicted. He was accused, for example, of believing that angels are better than prophets. He discussed this issue at length in this Commentary. He opened his discussion of this topic with the following words:

> People have debated the question as to which is superior: angels or human beings that are pious. It is said that the *Ahl as-Sunnah* believe that pious men, or at least the prophets among them, are superior to the angels. The Mu'tazilah, on the contrary, believe in the superiority of the angels. This opinion is also held by a group of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* and the Ṣūfīs. As for the Ash'arīs, some have no opinion on this issue and others are inclined to believe in the superiority of the angels. Shi'ah scholars say that all the imāms are superior to the angels, and exalted some categories of men over some categories of angels, and vice-versa. However, no one worth

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[36] For more about 'Alī Ibn Aybak Ibn 'Abdullah (d. 801/1398-9), see Ibn Al-'Imad, *Shadharat ad-Dhahab*, vol. 7, pp. 8f; Ibn Taghrī, *Ad-Dalīl ash-Shafi*, vol. I, p. 452.

[37] Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, p. 105; Ibn Ḥajar, *Anba' al-Ghumar bī Abnā' al-'Umar*, vol. II, pp. 95-98.

mention has said that the angels are superior to some prophets rather than others.

He then goes on to say:

> I was very reluctant to discuss this issue, for it does not avail much and is quite insignificant... Moreover, the Sh. [Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī] has not touched upon it, either negatively or positively. Probably he deliberately refrained from entering into its discussion. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, too, kept silent when he was asked about it... Our duty is only to believe in the angels and the prophets. We are not required to believe that one of them is superior to the other. Had it been a duty, there must have been some text to guide us on this issue.

However, he does enter into a discussion, cites the arguments of those who exalt the angels and of those who exalt the prophets and then concludes, "In short, this is an unimportant issue and that is why most of the writers on the subject have not discussed it; and Abū Ḥanīfah kept silent concerning it, as we have said before."[38]

The second issue concerning which he was accused dealt with the possibility of the prophets' committing minor sins. All scholars are agreed that the prophets committed no mistakes with respect to communicating to their people what God revealed to them. Similarly, they are agreed that prophets did not commit grave sins. But they differ on the question of whether prophets may commit a small sin sometimes. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz has not discussed this issue in his Commentary. In the note which he wrote on the ode of Ibn Aybak, he upheld the possibility of prophets sometimes committing minor sins by mistake. It seems that those who indicted him even negated this possibility. If that was the case, they were going against the majority opinion. Ibn Taymīyyah wrote:

> The view that the prophets do not commit grave sins and that they may commit small sins is the view of most scholars of Islam and most of their followers. One can say that this is the view of the majority of the theologians. Abū Al-Ḥassan Al-Amidī has noted that this is the view of the majority of the Ash'arī theologians as well as the majority of the scholars of Qur'ānic exegesis, *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*. What has come down from

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[38] Ibn Abī Al-'Izz, *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwīyyah*, ed. by Dr. 'Abdullah 'Abdul-Muḥsin At-Turkī and Shu'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ, vol. 1, pp. 410-423.

> the Salaf, the *imāms*, the Companions, the Successors and their successors, is not different from this view.[39]

Qāḍī 'Ayād, the famous Ash'arī theologian and Mālikī jurist, wrote in his renowned work, *Ash-Shifa'*:

> As for small sins, a group of the Salaf as well as others uphold its possibility. This is also the view of Abū Ja'far Aṭ-Ṭabarī and other scholars of *fiqh*, *ḥadīth* and *kalām*... Another group has refrained from saying anything positive on this issue. Rationally, it cannot be ruled out that they might commit small sins, but as for textual sources, there is nothing definitive either way. A third group of jurists and theologians uphold their absolute infallibility.[40]

It seems that those who indicted Ibn Abī Al-'Izz on this issue belonged to this third group.

The other points on which Ibn Abī Al-'Izz was indicted were problems such as whether it is correct to say, "The Prophet is sufficient for me," "Prophet, intercede on my behalf," or "Had the Prophet not been created, the heavens would not have been brought into being." Concerning the first statement, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz seems to have been inspired by what Ibn Al-Qayyīm wrote on this issue in *Zād al-Ma'ād*.[41] The second point has been taken up in the Commentary under the discussion of intercession. As for the third statement, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz pointed out that such statements can only be made on the basis of textual sources, and since there were no relevant texts, one should refrain from making such statements.

Some time after Ibn Abī Al-'Izz was released from prison, one of his well-wishers pleaded with the emir, Sayf ad-Dīn Balghuk Ibn 'Abdullah An-Nāṣirī, to reinstate him in his position and to restore

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[39] Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' Fatāwa Shaykh al-Islām*, ed. by 'Abdul-Raḥmān Ibn Qāsim and his son Muḥammad (Riyadh, 1398 A.H.), vol. IV, p. 319.

[40] Qāḍī 'Ayād, *Ash-Shifa' fī Ta'rīf Huquq*, p. 144. Also see Al-Āmidī, *Al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'arif, 1332/1914), vol. I, p. 244; Ibn Amīr Al-Ḥajj, *At-Taqrīr wa at-Taḥbīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyyah, 1403/1983), vol. II, p. 224; Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Ash-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl* (Cairo: Al-Ḥalabī, 1356 A.H.), pp. 33ff.

[41] Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, ed. by Shu'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ and 'Abdul-Qādir Al-Arnawūṭ (Beirut: Mu'assasat Ar-Risālah, 1399/1979), vol. I, pp. 35ff. The reader may refer to it for details.

his stipend. The emir agreed and issued the relevant orders. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz resumed teaching at Jawharīyyah and delivered sermons in the Mosque of Afram in the month of Rabi' al-Awwal in 791/1389. But this occupation proved to be short-lived. The following year, in the month of Dhul-Qi'dah, death overtook him and he met his Lord. He was buried in the cemetery of Qasiyūn. May Allah have mercy on him and shower His blessings on him.

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz did not write much. Besides the Commentary, which was his magnum opus and which we shall introduce shortly, he is said to have discussed, in a book entitled *At-Tanbīḥ 'alā Mushkilat al-Hidāyah*, some of the difficult issues of the famous work of Ḥanafī *fiqh*, *Al-Hidāyah* by Abū Bakr Burhān ad-Dīn 'Alī Al-Marghinānī (d. 593/1197). No manuscript of this book seems to be extant at the present time. Another tract, *Ṣiḥḥat al-Iqtida' bi al-Mukhalif*, was written to defend the practice of offering prayers behind an *imām* of a different school. A manuscript of this tract is preserved in the Tatwan Library in Morocco, and a photocopy of it may also be found in the library of Shaykh Ḥammad Al-Anṣārī of Madinah. Our sources[42] also mention another book which is no longer present, *An-Nūr al-Lāmi' fī ma yu'malu bihī fī al-Jami'*. The title implies that the book is about what one should do in the Mosque of Banū Umayyah in Damascus. Finally, we have already mentioned his small but fine book, *Al-Ittibā'*. This was first published in Lahore in 1401 A.H. and then in Oman in 1405 A.H.

The *Creed*

In his work, Dr. Szegin listed some thirty-two extant manuscripts of the *Creed* which were penned in different periods of time. The earliest one, which is preserved in Alexandria, was written in 783 A.H. It consists of six folios.[43] The editors of the commentary written by 'Abdul-Ghanī Al-Maydānī referred to earlier, stated that they have compared the text of the *Creed* with a manuscript written even earlier, in 732 A.H.[44] The earliest extant commentary on the *Creed*, by Najm ad-Dīn At-Turkī, was written in 646 A.H.[45]

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[42] See Ismā'īl Bāsha, *Hadyat al-'Ārifīn*, vol. I, p. 726.

[43] Fūwād Sezgin, *Tārīkh at-Tūrāth al-'Arabī*, vol. I, part III, p. 96.

[44] 'Abdul-Ghanī Al-Maydānī, *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah At-Ṭaḥāwīyyah*, p. 10.

[45] Fūwād Sezgin, op. cit., p. 97.

From whatever angle one looks at the *Creed* - format, language, ideas covered - it is definitely an authentic product of the late 3rd/9th or early 4th/10th century. The author begins with a statement on *tawḥīd* that Allah is One without a partner, All-Powerful, Eternal and Everlasting, unlike anything, beyond understanding and imagination, Ever-Living and All-Sustaining, Creator and Lord; He is qualified with attributes, essential and active, from eternity; what He wills happens and what He does not will does not happen; He has pre-ordained all things and they happen as He ordained them; and He guides whom He wills and He leaves astray whom He wills. Then he discusses the prophecy of Muḥammad (peace be on him), the Qur'ān, Beatific Vision, and he elaborates the point that Islam is to believe in the revelation and to submit to it. After this he returns to the Prophet's ascension, his fountain and his intercession. He had introduced fore-ordainment in the course of his statements on *tawḥīd*; here he resumes the discussion and goes into detail; he will also return to it a third time while discussing free will and responsibility. This feature, treating subjects in sections, was lamented by the commentator. Unfortunately, this style did not occur on just one issue. The question of God's attributes is also treated in the same way; some of His attributes are discussed in the beginning and some, like transcendence (*fawqīyyah*), ascending the Throne, descending to the lower heaven, hands, face and eyes, are discussed towards the end. This practice, however, was not peculiar to Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī. Al-Ash'arī also touched on certain themes more than once in his *Ibānah*.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī discusses at length issues regarding sin, faith and salvation. Then he mentions some practical issues, such as prayer behind a Muslim who is not pious or who has heretical views, or pilgrimage and *jihād* under an unjust ruler. In the end, he discusses things concerning life after death, the beliefs about the Companions of the Prophet, the question of *imāmah*, the place of saints and miracles. Finally, he ends with the affirmation that God's religion in all ages is one which must be followed and dissension must be avoided.

Issues which came up for discussion in later ages, such as the infallibility of the prophets, do not occur in either the text or the commentary. The text is completely free from any anachronism. On the other hand, practical issues, like wiping during ablution the back of the foot while wearing leather socks, which are subjects of *fiqh* not theology but which were debated at that time, are mentioned in the *Creed*, as they are mentioned in the *Ibānah* of Al-Ash'arī.

The language of the *Creed* is not the technical language of *kalām*. It is, as the commentator observed, a flowery language suitable for sermons. In this respect too, Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's *Creed* resembles the *Creed* of Al-Ash'arī, although the latter is comparatively more technical.

The Commentary

The commentator has divided the text into section. Most of these sections form a separate article of the *Creed* while some do not, being mere elaborations of preceding articles. This is why the sections have not been numbered in most editions of the book. We, on the other hand, have numbered the sections simply for the sake of reference; they should not be understood as delineating separate articles.

Commentary follows each section of the *Creed*. This method gives the commentator greater freedom for comment and elaboration, and he has fully utilized that freedom and presented a sizable commentary, larger perhaps than any other. At times, however, the text is very clear and the commentator has simply noted that it needs no comment or further elaboration.

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz wrote his commentary some five hundred years after the *Creed* was composed. A lot of water had flowed under the bridge during the intervening centuries. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz took due notice of all the developments in religious sciences and *kalām* which had taken place during that period. He also touched upon issues which Ṣūfī thought and experience had raised and concerning which Ibn Taymīyyah and Ibn Al-Qayyīm had addressed in their writings. The theological views that Ibn Abī Al-'Izz usually reacts to are those of the main Muslim sects: the Jahmīyyah, the Mu'tazilah, the Qadarīyyah, the Jabrīyyah and the Rafiḍah. He also comments on the Ash'arīs and later Ḥanafīs, whom he claims diverged from the path of the Salaf. Concerning religions other than Islam, he has very little comment.

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz was very critical of *kalām* and he tried to keep his commentary free from its evil influence. His basic objection to *kalām* was that it did not give the priority to revelation which revelation deserves. Instead of deriving its basic premises, concepts and arguments from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, *kalām* derives them from reason. This criticism is primarily directed towards the Jahmīyyah and the Mu'tazilah, who worked out a rationalistic doctrine of unity and, as a consequence, negated God's attributes.

On a lower level, however, this criticism also applies to the Ash'arīs and other mutakallimūn who first formed an imaginary idea of transcendence (*tanzīh*) and then denied the reality of a part of divine attributes. Some theologians rejected outright some concepts that are clearly and unequivocally stated in the texts; others took them as symbolic and interpreted them metaphorically. The Mu'tazilah, for example, rejected the possibility of God's vision in the Hereafter, and the Ash'arīs treated God's ascension on the Throne as symbolic of His authority.

The *mutakallimūn* also formed ideas that conflict with common sense and reason. An example is the Ash'arī doctrine regarding knowledge of the morally good and right. They deny that we can know these common truths with our reason; the only way to know them, they say, is revelation. But this view conflicts not only with common sense but also with many statements of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. The doctrine also deprives human beings, to note just one consequence, of any criterion to determine the veracity of a prophet except by his miracles. We are left with nothing to judge whether his message is good and acceptable or whether his life is noble and worthy of imitation.

Mutakallimūn mostly treat the Qur'ān as a book that states faith and gives rhetorical arguments in its support. As for demonstrative proofs, one has to look for them in their *kalām*. This is not true. The Qur'ān does offer rational arguments and convincing proofs, but the theologians do not reflect on them and rarely appreciate them. On the other hand, the arguments which they offer turn out, on close examination, to be hardly conclusive. This fact has been admitted by a number of their own leaders.[46]

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz does not denounce all *kalām*. He only rejects that *kalām* which contradicts revelation or reason. Nor does he oppose new terms, concepts and arguments which *kalām* took either from the natural sciences or philosophy, or developed by itself, such as body, substance and accident. One should first study such new terms, he says, determine what they mean, and then see whether they may be accepted or must be rejected.[47]

In commenting on Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's *Creed*, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz makes it a point to follow the method of the Salaf. This means, first, that in every issue that he faces he first turns to the Qur'ān and Sunnah and follows what they state, rather than first following reason. In

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[46] See infra, pp. 148-154.

[47] See infra, pp. 57f, 168.

speaking about God, for instance, he asserts about Him what He or His Prophet said about Him, and negates about Him what He or His Prophet negated about Him. He does not predicate anything of God simply on the basis of reason, nor does he prefer any term to describe Him if there is a term already stated in the revelation for the same purpose. To give an example, theologians use the term *qadim* to describe God's eternity. This is not a pleasing term for it merely means old and ancient, something that precedes another thing, but not that which precedes all things. The Qur'ān, on the other hand, uses the word Al-Awwal, the First, which means the One That precedes all and to Whom everything returns.[48] Hence, one should adhere to what the Qur'ān and the Prophet say about God.

Again, when the Qur'ān speaks about Allah, it describes in detail His positive attributes, that He is Living, Knowing, Powerful, Seeing, Hearing, and so on. But in describing Him negatively, the Qur'ān is brief; it simply says, "Nothing is like Him." This is in clear contrast to the way of the *mutakallimūn* who never tire of saying that God is not this, nor is He that, and so on, trying to reduce His positive attributes to a minimum. The truth of this statement may be confirmed by referring to the Mu'tazilī description of Allah's attributes that Al-Ash'arī reproduced in his *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*.[49]

Like the Salaf, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz takes the texts of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah at their face or literal value and he avoids interpreting them symbolically. He takes God's descent to the lower heaven or ascent to the Throne at face value. Similarly, he takes God's hand, face and eyes literally and avoids interpreting them metaphorically as the *mutakallimūn* do. However, to say that these attributes are real is not to say that they resemble the attributes of the creatures. Allah descends and ascends but not as humans do. Similarly, He has hands and eyes but not as humans have. To assert the reality of these attributes is not to anthropomorphize God. If to assert knowledge or will to God is not to liken Him with any creature, why should asserting hands and eyes to him be likening Him to man? In either case, we add the qualification that one attribute is not the like the other attribute.

This has been stated by the Salaf from the beginning, by scholars of *ḥadīth* as well as *fiqh*, by Imāms Mālik and Aḥmad as

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[48] See infra, pp. 36-39.

[49] Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, ed. by Helmut Ritter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1980), pp. 155f.

well as Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. But Ibn Taymīyyah added a new dimension to it when he said that general predicates, or universals, are mere concepts in the mind; they do not refer to any external reality. What exists in reality is something particular. There is no will, knowledge, hand or eye as such; what exists out there is this will or that will, this knowledge or that knowledge, this hand or that hand, and so on. No one will is the same as another will, and no one hand is the same as another hand. Hence, to say that Allah has will, knowledge, a hand or eye is not to anthropomorphize these attributes; Allah's will is Allah's will, and man's will is man's will; they are not alike. Similarly, Allah's hand is Allah's hand and man's hand is man's hand and they are not the same. There is nothing out there in which the divine and the human share.[50] This nominalism is the contribution of Ibn Taymīyyah to the thought of the Salaf and it was wholeheartedly endorsed by Ibn Abī Al-'Izz.[51]

In understanding the text of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz adheres to what the Salaf (the Companions, their Successors and the recognized *imāms*) have stated. For instance, the Salaf have understood the texts which say that Allah is above the world, above the heavens, and above the Throne to mean that Allah is not in the world, but above and beyond the world. On the other hand, they have understood the texts which say that Allah is with us and that He is nearer to us than our jugular vein to mean that He is with us in knowledge, not in being. He knows us intimately. Both understandings are real; the latter may appear to be a metaphorical interpretation, but it is not. It is just the face meaning (*az-zāhir*) of the text.[52] We have to go by the Salaf's understanding of the texts for they knew and understood them better than we. The principle of following the understanding of the Salaf is not confined to the interpretation of texts; it extends to the understanding of the values and norms of Islamic life, as well as the conduct (*sulūk*) of the individual. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz's comments on mystical experience and Ṣūfī *ṭarīqah* illustrate this point.[53]

We observed earlier that one of the weaknesses of *kalām* was that it developed ideas that conflicted not only with revelation but

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[50] Ibn Taymīyyah elaborated this view at various places in his writings. For example, *Majmu'at al-Rasā'il wa al-Masā'il*, ed. by Rashīd Riḍa (Cairo, n.d.), vol. IV, pp. 15-22; Ar-Risālah at-Tadmurīyyah (Riyadh: Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd Islamic University Press, 1403 A.H.), pp. 79f.

[51] See infra, pp. 28f.

[52] See infra, p. 234.

[53] See infra, pp. 21-23, 446ff.

also with reason and human nature. As an example, we cited the Ash'arī view regarding ethical knowledge. There are other cases also: the Ash'arī view that there is nothing obligatory on God; that His acts have no purpose or end; that nothing causes anything; that human will is absolutely ineffective; and that every act is done by God. Ibn Taymīyyah and his school criticized all these ideas on grounds of reason as well as revelation. They maintained that there is no contradiction between authentic tradition and clear reason. If there arises an apparent conflict, it may be due to the tradition not being authentic or what is believed to be rational not being something established but something merely believed to be so. This led the school of Ibn Taymīyyah to thoroughly examine rational statements as well as to closely scrutinize tradition. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz followed this practice in his commentary, although it must be admitted that at times he quotes *aḥādīth* which are weak and unauthentic. (We have pointed out such *aḥādīth* in our notes.)

Tawḥīd for *kalām* is an issue concerning how to maintain Allah's unity in view of the plurality of His attributes. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz addresses this issue and goes into the relation between essence and attributes.[54] But, he points out, the *tawḥīd* that the Qur'ān expounds is not of this nature. Qur'ānic *tawḥīd* is to affirm in belief and in action that Allah is the only object of worship, prayer, reverence, love, submission and obedience. No one else can command total submission, absolute obedience, extreme reverence and profound love. This unity of Godhead (*tawḥīd al-ilahīyyah*), the Qur'ān maintains, follows from the unity of the Creator and Lord (*tawḥīd al-rubūbīyyah*), which is part of the natural endowment (*fiṭrah*) of man. It is not something to be argued but to be discovered. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz elaborates on the concept of *fiṭrah* very cogently. Of course, he has taken his ideas from Ibn Taymīyyah, but Ibn Abī Al-'Izz develops them further.

Prophets and, above all, Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on them all) realized most perfectly the *tawḥīd al-ilāhīyyah* in their lives. But the *tawḥīd* which the Ṣūfīs try to experience is *tawḥīd al-rubūbīyyah*. This is not the end, they should know, which Allah's revelation expounds or His prophets preach. In fact, mere recognition that the Creator and the Lord is one, without accepting

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[54] See infra, pp. 53ff.

Him as God and submitting to Him, does not qualify a person as a believer or faithful, not to speak of as a walī or saint.[55]

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz does not distinguish between the essential and active attributes of Allah; all His attributes are eternal. He is not only Living, Knowing and Powerful from eternity, but He is also creating things and providing for them from eternity. This is the belief of the Salaf, the scholars of *ḥadīth* as well as Abū Ḥanīfah and his colleagues. To the objection that this would then imply the eternity of the world, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz's answer is that it only implies the eternity of things as a class, not of any particular thing or things. Moreover, it does not violate the truth that Allah is the First.

Speech, too, is an eternal attribute of Allah. He has been speaking from eternity, but not as the Ash'arīs and Māturidīyyah believe. For the latter, Allah's speech is one eternal idea within Him, an inner speech (*kalām nafsī*) of which the Torah, Gospel and Qur'ān are interpretations in Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic. Hence, for them the Qur'ān is Allah's word, not in the sense that He has spoken it but in the sense that it is the interpretation of His eternal speech. His eternal speech is uncreated but its interpretation in different languages is created.[56] For Ibn Abī Al-'Izz, on the other hand, the Qur'ān is really the word of Allah, not its interpretation. He is the One Who has spoken and articulated it; and it is this articulated speech which Gabriel heard from Allah and communicated to the Prophet (peace be on him). And although Allah's speech is an expression of His will, that is, He speaks when and as He likes, His speech is not part of the created world; it is not something created. It stands with Him in a special relation: in one respect it is with Him, which is why the Prophet (peace be on him) sought shelter in Allah's words while no Muslim may seek protection in anything non-divine; on the other hand, it is the expression of Allah's will. In view of this dual relation, the Salaf have defined that the Qur'ān is uncreated but declined to say that it is eternal. Although the Qur'ān is uncreated, our recitation of it and our writing it are our actions and are created, like we are.

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[55] See infra, pp. 16, 21ff.

[56] This is a rather simple statement of a more complicated position. For details, see Al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, ed. by Fatḥullah Khulayf (Alexandria: Dār al-Jāmi'at al-Misrīyyah), pp. 58f, XXI-II; Abū 'Adhbah, *Ar-Rawdah al-Bahīyyah* (Hyderabad, 1322 A.H.), pp. 43-54; Al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, ed. by M. Yūsuf Mūsā 'Alī 'Abdul-Mun'im (Cairo: Al-Khānjī, 1950), pp. 99-129; Al-'Ijī, *Al-Mawāqif* (Beirut: 'Alam al-Kutub, n.d.), pp. 293f.

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz distinguishes between the creative and the prescriptive will of Allah. The former is meant in the sentence, "What God wills happens and what He does not will, does not happen." The latter is meant in the sentence, "God wills that we should worship and obey Him." In the case of the former, it is Allah Who acts; in the latter case, He asks someone else to act. Again, the object of the former may be good or evil, while the object of the latter is always good. In other words, creative will does not necessarily imply that God must like and approve of its object; prescriptive will, on the other hand, does. That is, God likes and approves of what He asks anyone to do. In light of this clarification, it would not be difficult to affirm that evil is also from God, that it is He Who creates it, but it does not then follow that He approves of it. God does not create absolute evil. Every evil that He brings into existence is a condition or a means to something good. No evil is an end in itself.[57]

It is also necessary to see that when God wills man to do an act, it is not necessary that He also help him do it. If He helps him, that will be a favor from Him, but if he does not, and lets him defy Him and do evil, He does him no injustice. He has created man, given him power, shown him the right path and asked him to submit; it is then for man to submit or defy. If Allah does not further help him in carrying out His command, it is no injustice on His part. But if He does help him, it is a favor and a blessing from Him.

Allah has power over everything, but this does not negate, says Ibn Abī Al-'Izz, causality between things or the efficacy of human will. He has made one thing the cause of another thing, not only in the sense the Ash'arīs allow, that one thing is the condition for another thing, but also in the sense that one thing produces another thing. Similarly, He has given power to human will. Those who deny this power or negate causality do not do justice with the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz further distinguishes between a power that precedes an action and is the basis for God's commandment and a power in the form of will and determination that coexists with an action. It is in light of this distinction that he explains the texts related to this subject.[58]

On the question regarding the order of distinction between the first four rightly-guided caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī, Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī mentions that the order of their caliphates is the order of their honor or distinction. Ibn Abī Al-'Izz has endorsed this

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[57] See infra, p. 204.

[58] See infra, pp. 378f.

view, noting that it is the view of the Salaf in general. This implies that 'Uthmān is superior to 'Alī. However, Abū Ḥanīfah, as it appears in the *Manāqib* literature on him, exalted 'Alī over 'Uthmān.[59] One may ask how it is that Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī opposed Abū Ḥanīfah on this point. The answer may be that probably the leaders of Abū Ḥanīfah's school differed from him on this point and sided with the majority of the Salaf with Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī following suit. The writers of *Al-Fiqh al-Ākbar* went a step further when they attributed this view to Abū Ḥanīfah himself.[60] Since Ibn Abī Al-'Izz had no doubt about the authenticity of this *Creed*, he was satisfied that he also had Abū Ḥanīfah on his side.

Text of the Commentary and its Translation

Ibn Abī Al-'Izz's commentary on the *Creed* of Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī was first published in 1349/1930 by Al-Matba'ah as-Salafiyyah in Makkah on the basis of a single manuscript which was full of mistakes. Sh. 'Abdullah Ibn Ḥassan Āl Ash-Shaykh, by whose efforts the book was published, formed a committee of scholars who went through the text and corrected its mistakes. The renowned Egyptian *ḥadīth* scholar, Sh. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr, revised this edition and published the book through Dar al-Ma'arif in Cairo in 1373/1953. However, he did not have any new manuscript to refer to. In 1381/1961, a group of scholars from Syria produced a third edition of the Commentary based on a manuscript written in 1322 A.H. which was no less faulty. In correcting it, the group referred to the edition of Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr. They published the book with brief notes by Sh. Nāṣir ad-Dīn Al-Albānī concerning the *aḥādīth* mentioned in the Commentary. Sh. Shū'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ, a Syrian *ḥadīth* scholar, produced another edition from Syria in 1401/1981.

Since he did not have access to any new manuscripts, he relied on the edition of Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr. However, he corrected some of the earlier mistakes and commented in some detail on the *aḥādīth* of the book in footnotes. A year later, Dr. 'Abdul-Raḥmān 'Umayrah produced the fifth edition of the book from Cairo. In preparing this edition, he referred to a manuscript preserved in the library of the famous 9th/15th century scholar, Jalāl ad-Dīn As-

[59] See Abū Zahrah, *Abū Ḥanīfah*, p. 169.

[60] See Mullah 'Alī Al-Qarī, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* (Beirut, 1404/1984), p. 98.

Suyūṭī in Egypt, along with the earlier editions of the work. For some unstated reasons, however, he did not base his edition on that manuscript. A sixth edition of the book was published in Beirut in 1405/1984-5 with notes and references regarding *aḥādīth* by Bashīr Muḥammad 'Uyūn. He based his edition on the earlier editions and barely added anything new.

The best and most correct edition of the *Commentary* is the one which Dr. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abdul-Muḥsin At-Turkī, Rector of Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd Islamic University in Riyadh, and Sh. Shū'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ, the editor of the fourth edition mentioned above, collaborated on and published in two volumes through the *Mu'assasat ar-Risālah* in Beirut in 1988. Their work is based on four manuscripts of the *Commentary*: one written in 782 A.H. during the lifetime of the commentator and compared with the original manuscript; another written in 883 A.H. and also compared with the original manuscript; the third was a photocopy of a manuscript written in 1217 A.H.; and the fourth was also written in the same year. In their introduction, the editors discussed at length the life and work of the author and the commentator, whereas the editors of the earlier editions had only briefly touched upon these subjects. Another distinction of this edition is that it contains full and detailed comments on the *aḥādīth* and traditions which occur in the Commentary.

In this regard, Sh. Shū'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ greatly improved upon his own comments in his earlier edition. Finally, the editors noted in the footnotes the works of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyyah and his disciple, Ibn al-Qayyīm, mentioning the pages where they dealt with the issues which the commentator discusses. In places they have also pointed out the passages which the commentator has reproduced or abridged.

In translating the Commentary, I had the editions of Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr, Sh. Shū'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ and Nāṣir ad-Dīn Al-Albānī before me. The edition of Dr. 'Abdullah At-Turkī and Shū'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ had not appeared by that time; I received it when I had almost finished the first draft of the translation. However, in revising the draft I did refer to their edition on many occasions. But except in a few places, the differences between theirs and other editions were not of much significance.

In preparing the references to the *aḥādīth*, I have relied mainly upon the edition of Dr. 'Abdullah At-Turkī and Sh. Shū'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ. In general, I retained the references to better known works

and dropped the references to lesser known works, unless such references were indispensable. I have also summarized their detailed observations. For convenience of reference, I have often mentioned sections and chapters of different *ḥadīth* collections along with the numbers of the *aḥādīth* which they have given. I also noted the works of Ibn Taymīyyah and Ibn Al-Qayyīm which deal with the issues that Ibn Abī Al-'Izz discussed.

Concerning the personalities and scholars mentioned in the Commentary, the authors of the various editions have had little comment. Dr. 'Abdullah At-Turkī and Sh. Shū'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ introduced them very briefly. I have written about them in more detail, taking note also of what has appeared concerning them in languages other than Arabic. As the translation is meant for readers not necessarily aware of Islamic history and personalities, I have also given biographies of a number of figures whom Dr. Turkī and Sh. Al-Arnawūṭ did not feel the need to discuss as their readers are more or less conversant with Islamic history. In an appendix at the end of the book, I have put together the different sections of the *Creed* and indicated the pages where they occur in the translation. In this manner, the reader may have a look at the *Creed* as a whole.

COMMENTATOR'S PREFACE

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, ask for His forgiveness; and we seek refuge in Allah from the evil in our souls and from the wrong of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides, there is no one to misguide him; and whomever He leaves astray, there is none to guide him. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, the One, with no partner. I also bear witness that our revered Muḥammad is His servant and messenger. May Allah bless him and his family, his companions and his followers, and shower on them peace and favors.

The science of the principles of faith (*uṣūl ad-dīn*) is the noblest of all the sciences, for the dignity of a science depends upon the dignity of the subject it studies. It is the *fiqh al-ākbar* (higher knowledge) in contrast to *fiqh al-furu* (knowledge of practical rules). For this reason, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah named what he stated and gathered together in writing concerning the foundations of the religion *fiqh al-ākbar*. A person's need for this understanding is greater than any other need. It is a greater necessity than any other necessity, for there is no life, pleasure or tranquility for hearts except by knowing their Lord, object of adoration and Creator, by His names, attributes and acts. In knowing that, he will love Him above everything, and he will seek all that brings him close to Him and he will not pursue anything else of His creation.

It is impossible for unaided human reason to know all of the above and to realize it in detail. Therefore, the mercy of the Merciful led Him to send messengers to teach about Him and to call people to belief in Him. Whoever responded (positively) to them received good tidings from the prophets, and whoever opposed them received warnings from them. The key and essence of their missions was to impart knowledge of the Adored, may He be glorified, through His names, attributes and actions. From beginning to end, the goal of their prophecies was built upon this knowledge.

This is thus followed by two important principles. First is the knowledge of the way to Allah and that way is His Shari'ah, which consists of His commands and prohibitions. Second is the knowledge of the happiness and bounties which are reserved for those who come to Allah by following the proper way.

Those who know Allah best are the best followers of the path to Him and the most knowledgeable of the life that awaits them when they come to Him. For this reason, Allah called what He revealed to

His messengers *rūh*, or 'spirit', because the real life is dependent on it. He also called it light (*nūr*) because guidance is dependent upon it. Allah, the Most High, says, "By His command He sends the spirit to any of His servants He pleases" [40:15], and "Thus We have sent, by Our command, the spirit to you. You knew not before what was Revelation and what was Faith. But We have made it (the Qur'ān) a light, wherewith We guide such of Our servants as We will. And you guide (men) to the Straight Path, the Way of Allah to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Behold all affairs tend towards Allah" [42:52-53]. There is no life except through what the Messenger brought and there is no light except what is lit by it. It is the cure and healing, as Allah says, "Say: it is a guide and healing for the Believers" [41:44]. Although it is a cure and healing for anyone, since only the Believers benefit from it, they are specifically mentioned.

Allah sent His messengers with guidance and the true religion. Aside from what they brought, there is no true guidance. There is no doubt that it is obligatory upon every individual to believe in what the Messenger brought in general. There is also no doubt that to know the detailed matters of what the Messenger brought is an obligation upon the community as a whole (*farḍ kifāyah*). This detailed knowledge make up part of the knowledge which is required for preaching the revelation, for elaborating on the Qur'ān, for teaching the Book and the Sunnah, for guarding the message against corruption, for disseminating its ideas, for enjoining good and forbidding evil, for calling men to the Way of the Lord with wisdom, effective persuasion and cogent argument, and for many other things which Allah has made incumbent upon the Believers. Therefore, it is their collective responsibility (to know and understand what the Prophet brought in detail).

As for individuals themselves, the obligation upon them varies according to their talents, abilities, knowledge and what they have been specifically commanded to do. The responsibility of one who is incapable of understanding a particular idea or enter into its depths is not the same as the responsibility of one who has such a capability. The responsibility of one who hears a particular text or who can explain a text and work out its implications is not the same as the responsibility of one who has not heard such a text or who does not understand it. Obviously, the responsibilities of a jurist, scholar of *ḥadīth*, or ruler differ from the responsibilities of those who do not hold such positions.

One must realize that the majority of those who strayed concerning this topic or those who failed to recognize the truth have

done so because they have not paid due attention to following what the Messenger brought, or they did not ponder it or appreciate its arguments that lead to this knowledge. Once they turned away from the Book of Allah, they went astray. As Allah states, "But whenever My guidance comes to you, whoever follows My guidance will not go astray or be distressed. As for him who turns his face away from My message, his living will become straitened, and on the Day of Resurrection, We will raise him sightless. He will say, 'My Lord! Why have You raised me blind when I had been able to see?' He will reply, So will it be. My signs and messages came to you, but you forgot them all. So will you be forgotten this day." [20:123-126]

Ibn 'Abbās said, "Allah has guaranteed that whoever reads the Qur'ān and acts upon it will never go astray in this life, nor will he suffer misery in the next," and then he recited the above verses. At-Tirmidhī and other compilers of *ḥadīth* reported on the authority of 'Alī that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "There will be trials and tribulations." The people asked, "How will we save ourselves?" He replied, "Adhere to the Book of Allah, which speaks of those who have gone before, as well as of those who will come later, and tells the truth in clear and definite terms in matters concerning which you disagree. Whoever neglects it out of conceit will be humiliated by Allah. Whoever looks for guidance elsewhere will be misled by Allah. It is the cord of Allah, which will never break, the Wise Message and the Right Path, which will never be distorted by evil minds or corrupted by wicked tongues. Its mysteries will never end, nor will scholars ever be satisfied by what they know of it. Whoever speaks according to it has spoken the truth; whoever acts upon it will be rewarded; whoever rules according to it does justice; and whoever calls to it invites to the Straight Path."[61] There are many more verses and *aḥādīth* of similar meaning.

Allah does not accept any way of life from the first or last of mankind unless it is in accordance with the way of life prescribed

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[61] At-Tirmidhī, *Sunan* (the edition referred to here is the one edited by Muḥammad Fūwād 'Abdul-Bāqī, Cairo: Maktabat Al-Ḥalabī and Sons, 1388/1968, second edition; henceforth referred to as At-Tirmidhī), *ḥadīth* no. 2908; Ad-Dārimī, *Sunan* (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmīyyah; henceforth referred to as Ad-Dārimī), vol. 2, p. 435; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, ed. by Shu'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ and Muḥammad Ash-Shawish (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1390/1971; henceforth referred to as Al-Baghawī), *ḥadīth* no. 1181. Ibn Kathīr discussed this *ḥadīth* in his *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār Al-Andulus, 1403/1983), p. 10, and said that it is the statement of 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib and not that of the Prophet (peace be on him).

through the tongues of His messengers. He has declared that He rejects all that people ascribe to Him except what the prophets stated about Him. He states, "Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of Honor and Power. He is free from what they ascribe to Him. And peace be on the messengers. And praise be to Allah, the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds" [37:180-182]. He has thus exalted Himself above the unbecoming attributes the unbelievers ascribed to Him. Then He blessed the prophets because they did not ascribe any shortcoming or defect to Him. Then He praised Himself because of His unique attributes that entitle Him to complete praise.

The best people of all generations, the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) and their righteous Successors, followed the way which the Prophet (peace be on him) had shown. The Companions taught it to the Successors and the Successors followed the Companions. They thus walked on the path the Prophet (peace be on him) blazed. As Allah says in His Noble Book, "Say: This is my way; I do call to God with full knowledge, I and those who follow me" [12:108]. (By the Arabic structure of the verse,) "those who follow me" could relate back to "I do call to God," [meaning, 'I call to God as do those who follow me,') which is evidence that those who follow him are the real callers to the way of Allah. Or, it could be referring to "with full knowledge," thus stating clearly that those who follow him are those with full knowledge of what he brought as opposed to others (who do not have such knowledge). Both meanings are sound.

The Prophet (peace be on him) delivered the message clearly and explained it for those who seek the truth. The best generations followed his path and way. Then came generations afterwards who followed their lusts and divided into sects. But then Allah raised for this nation people who protected and restated the foundations and principles of its religion, as the Prophet (peace be on him) stated, "There will always be a group of my nation that will defend the truth. Those who forsake them will not harm them."[62]

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[62]Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. by Muḥammad Fūwād 'Abdul-Bāqī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā at-Turāth al-'Arabī, first edition, 1375/1965, henceforth referred to as Muslim), *ḥadīth* no. 1920; At-Tirmidhī, 2230; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, ed. by Muḥammad Fūwād 'Abdul-Bāqī (Beirut: Dār Iḥya at-Turāth al-'Arabī; henceforth referred to as Ibn Mājah), *ḥadīth* no. 10. The *ḥadīth*, with some change in wording and with different chains, was also recorded by Aḥmad, *Musnad* (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1398/1978; henceforth referred to as Aḥmad), vol. 4, p. 244, 248 and 252; Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. by Muḥibb ad-Dīn Al-Khātīb and Muḥammad Fūwād 'Abdul-Bāqī (Al-Maṭba'ah as-Salafīyyah, 1400 A.H.; henceforth referred to as Al-Bukhārī), *ḥadīth* number 3640, 3641, 7311, 7312 and

One of the Muslim scholars who fulfilled that obligation was Imām Abū Ja'far Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Salāmah Al-Azdī Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, may Allah immerse him in His mercy. He lived during the third century after the Hijrah; he was born in 239 A.H. and died in 321 A.H. He reported what the Elders (Salaf) followed. He quoted from Imām Abū Ḥanīfah An-Nu'mān Ibn Thabit Al-Kūfī and his two colleagues, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb Ibn Ibrāhīm Al-Ḥimyarī Al-Anṣārī and Muḥammad Ibn Ḥassan Ash-Shaybānī, the principles of faith they believed in to please their Lord. May Allah bless them.

As time passed on, heresies and deviations - what their proponents (deceivingly) called *ta'wīl* ('correct interpretation') in order for it to be accepted - began to appear. Very few could distinguish between correct interpretation and wrong, deviant interpretations. *Ta'wīl*, as they understood it, was to discard the plain meaning of the text and understand it in a sense different from what its words implied, even though there was nothing in the words to suggest that meaning. This was a source of evil. Since they called it *ta'wīl*, and as people began using the term in that sense, it became difficult to distinguish correct interpretation from misinterpretation.

After that began, the Believers came to be in need of clear expositions and refutations of the misconceptions presented. This led to a lot of discussion and discord. The cause for that was the people's inclining to the misconceptions and doubts the heretics had raised and their entering into blameworthy philosophical discussions that the Elders had discouraged. The Elders prohibited studying, preoccupation with, or leaning towards such philosophy or scholasticism. This was in compliance with their Lord's command, Who said, "When you see men engaged in vain discourse about Our words, turn away from them unless they turn to a different topic." [6:68] The meaning of this verse clearly applies to them.

Misinterpretation of the text and deviation from the truth are of varying degrees: some are infidelity (*kufr*), some are intransigence (*fisq*), some are sin (*ma'ṣīyyah*) and some are simply mistakes (*kha't*).

It is necessary to follow the messengers strictly and adhere to what Allah revealed to them. Prophecy ended with Muḥammad (peace be on him). He was made the final prophet; his Book was

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elsewhere; At-Tirmidhī, 2192; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, ed. by Muḥammad Muḥīy ad-Dīn 'Abdul-Ḥāmid (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥya as-Sunnah an-Nubuwīyyah/Dār at-Turāth al-'Arabī; henceforth referred to as Abū Dāwūd), *ḥadīth* no. 2484.

made the judge over all the books revealed before; he was given the Book and the Sunnah; and his message was for all responsible creatures – both men and jinns – for all times, until the Day of Resurrection. Through him, Allah has established the truth, explained everything people need, and completed his religion for him and his nation. He has declared that obedience to the Prophet is obedience to Allah and disobedience to the Prophet is disobedience to Allah. Furthermore, He swore by Himself that people will not be true Believers unless they submit to the Prophet's verdict on differences that may arise between them. He also stated that only hypocrites would ignore the Prophet and take their disputes to others for judgment. When they are called to Allah and the Messenger (to judge between them) – that is, to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger – they oppose it completely and claim that they simply want what is best and blessed.

And many of the dialecticians, philosophers and others say the same, "We want to know things as they really are. And we want to reconcile the rational evidence – what they call rational evidence which is actually ignorant evidence – and the reported statements from the Messenger." Or, "We want to bring the Shari'ah and philosophy into agreement."

Or as many of the heretics among the ascetics and Ṣūfīs say, "We want the best life by bringing together the Shari'ah and the falseness that they call reality." This is ignorance and misguidance. Similarly, many who have by any means grabbed power claim, "We want to improve the conditions of the people and reconcile their principles of government and the Shari'ah," and so on.

Whoever intends to establish anything in religion besides what the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught, and believes that it is good and that combines what the Prophet had with what contradicts it will only get the latter, for what the Prophet brought is sufficient and perfect. Every truth is part of it. Shortcomings and errors only come from the many Muslims themselves who actually do not know what the Prophet stated in matters related to theology, in matters related to different aspects of worship or in matters related to governmental affairs. Or they ascribe to the Shari'ah of the Messenger, because of their suppositions and customs, things that are not part of it and they discard many things which are part of that Shari'ah. As a result of the ignorance and error of some, and the intransigence and hypocrisy of others, the knowledge of the Prophet's teachings is on the decline and hypocrisy is on the rise.

It is necessary that we acquaint ourselves completely with what the Messenger (peace be on him) taught, reflect deeply on it and

apply it to all that we know and believe. We must apply it both exoterically and esoterically. In that way, we will do justice to the Book and will not discard anything of it.

If someone is not able to know or act upon all of that knowledge, he should not oppose what he cannot comprehend of what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought. It is sufficient for him that he is not to be blamed for his inability. But he should be happy that someone else is able to do what he cannot. It should please him. He should wish that he could do the same. He should not believe in some parts of the revelation and not in others, but he must believe in all of the Book. He must also refrain from putting into it what does not belong to it, even if it be something passed on from earlier people or opinion, and refrain from following anything, in belief or actions, that is not from Allah. As Allah, the Most High, has said, "Do not confuse the truth with falsehood, nor hide the truth knowingly." [2:42]

This was the way of the earliest generation of Elders (Salaf), those who followed them in good, the leaders of the religion (*a'immat ad-dīn*) whom the entire Muslim nation accepts, and those who follow them until the Day of Resurrection. Abū Yūsuf, may Allah have mercy on him, said to Bishr Al-Mārisī, "Knowledge of *kalām* is ignorance, and ignorance of *kalām* is knowledge. Whoever masters *kalām* should be called or accused of being a heretic-hypocrite (*zindīq*)." By "ignorance of *kalām*" he meant the belief that it is not true, that it by itself is beneficial knowledge, or he meant by that refraining from *kalām* and avoiding studying it. That it will protect a person's knowledge and intellect and is part of knowledge itself. Allah knows best. He also said, "Whoever seeks knowledge through *kalām* becomes a heretic-hypocrite. Whoever seeks wealth by alchemy will become penniless. Whoever runs after lone (*gharīb*) *ḥadīth* falls into falsehood."

Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "My judgment concerning the people engaged in *kalām* is that they should be flogged with palm branches and shoes and taken round and displayed before the tribes and clans." And he stated, "This is the punishment for those who ignore the Qur'ān and Sunnah and instead engage in *kalām*." He also stated, in lines of poetry, "Every knowledge except the Qur'ān is diversion except (also) *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* in religion. Knowledge is found there. What He related to us is stated; beyond that is only what has been whispered by Satan." What the companions (of Ash-Shāfi'ī) mentioned in their legal rulings, he would advise the scholars of his land, "Do not let the

scholastic theologians (*mutakillimūn*) be among you." The Elders said that if a man willed to have his books left as a religious endowment, the books of *kalām* among his books should be sold (and not kept as part of the religious endowment). That has been stated in *Al-Fatāwa adh-Dhahirīyyah*.

How can one wish to attain the knowledge of the foundations or principle aspects without following what the Messenger brought? What an excellent statement was made by the one who said in poetry, "You who go out in search of knowledge, all knowledge is subservient to the knowledge of the Messenger. Do you seek the fine details to correct the foundation, and you have forgotten the foundation of the foundations?"

The Prophet was given full control over language. He knew how to begin a speech, how to conclude it, and how to put many ideas in few words. He was sent with general principles and the knowledge of the matters of this world as well as the next. Later it happened that whenever anyone came with an innovation, people took it and wrote volumes to respond to it, although such deeds contain few blessings. The Elders, on the other hand, used to speak and write little, but what they said was very useful and full of blessings. It is not as the straying scholastic theologians say, "The method of those people was safer but ours is wiser and more erudite." Or as those who have no ability to reflect in matters of *fiqh*, "(the Elders) did not formulate or define the principles, as they were busy with other matters. We devoted ourselves to these things so we are more knowledgeable than they."

All those people are ignorant of the greatness of the Elders and their profound knowledge, deep insight and unassuming style. By Allah, the later writers only distinguished themselves by writing on marginal issues, whereas the Elders were concerned with the fundamentals. They laid down the basic rules, defined the principles and were interested in major issues and problems of real importance. The later writers were concerned about one thing while the Elders were concerned with something completely different. And Allah has decreed for everything its measure.

Many scholars have commented on this creed, but I have noticed that these commentators have inclined to the way of the unacceptable *kalām*, based their arguments upon them and spoken according to their terms.

The Elders did not disapprove of new terms like substance, body, accident, and so on, just because they were new terms trying to convey true ideas. In fact, they never objected to the terms which the new sciences employed. Nor did they oppose any effort to

establish the truth and refute the objections which heretics and non-Muslims raised. They disapproved only of those new terms which conveyed wrong ideas opposed to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. This is why the exponents of these (heretical) ideas lack the conviction which an ordinary Muslim has, not to speak of the scholars among the Elders.

Since their premises contained both truth and untruth, differences arose and controversies multiplied, and ideas conflicting with the authentic Shari'ah and clear reason were put forward. This is not the place to enter into such a discussion; we will discuss the matter further while commenting on the author's words, "Whoever seeks knowledge that has been withheld from him..."

I desired to comment on it following the way of the Elders. I have benefited from their writings and built upon their ideas. I hope to be counted among their followers and to be resurrected with them in the Hereafter, "...with those upon whom is the grace of Allah: the prophets, the sincere lovers of truth, the witnesses thereto, and the righteous – what a beautiful fellowship!" [4:49]

Since people do not like lengthy expositions, I have tried to be brief in my comments. "My success in the task can only come from Allah; in Him I trust and unto Him I turn" [11:88], and, "He is sufficient for us; and what a good disposer of affairs." [3:173]

THE CREED OF AṬ-ṬAḤĀWĪ

(1) We say about the Unity of Allah - with Allah's help - that Allah is one, without any partners.

(2) There is nothing like Him.

(3) Nothing is impossible for Him.

(4) There is no god other than He.

(5) He is Eternal without a beginning, Everlasting without an end.

(6) He does not perish (*yafnā*) or pass away (*yabīd*).

(7) Nothing comes into being except what He wills.

(8) No imagination (*wahm*) can conceive of Him, and no understanding (*fahm*) can fathom Him.

(9) He does not resemble mankind.

(10) He is Living and will never die. He is All-Sustaining and never sleeps.

(11) He creates without being in need to do so, and provides for His creation without any trouble (*bilā mu'unah*).

(12) He causes death without fear, and He resurrects (the dead) with no effort.

(13) He has always existed with His attributes, even before the creation of the world, which did not add anything to His attributes that were not already present. Just as He is Eternal along with His attributes, so He is Everlasting along with them.

(14) It is not the case that He acquired the name Creator (Al-Khāliq) only after He created, or the name Originator (Al-Bārī) only after He originated (something).

(15) He was qualified with Lordship (*rubūbīyyah*) even when there was nothing to lord over. And He was the Creator even when there was nothing created.

(16) In the same way that He is the "Reviver of life to the Dead", after He has given them life a first time, He deserves this name before bringing them to life; so, too, He deserves the name Creator before He actually created them.

(17) This is because He has power over all things (*kulli shayy*). All things depend on Him and are easy for Him. He is not in need of anything. Nothing is like Him. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

(18) He created (*khalaqa*) the creation (*khālq*) with His Knowledge (*bi-'ilmihi*).

(19) He has ordained all things in due measure.

(20) He has fixed their terms.

(21) Nothing about them was hidden from Him before He created them. And He knew everything they would do before He created them.

(22) He has commanded them to obey Him and He has forbidden them to disobey Him.

(23) Things occur as He ordains and wills them. His will is always carried out. There is no will for His servants except for what He wills for them. Whatever He wills for them happens and what He does not will for them does not happen.

(24) He gives guidance to whomever He wills, protects them and keeps them safe from harm as an act of grace. And He leads astray whomever He wills, abases them and afflicts them out of His justice.

(25) All of them are subject to His will, between either His grace or His justice.

(26) He is exalted above having opponents (*aḍād*) or equals (*andād*).

(27) His decision is never reversed; His command is never resisted; His will is never frustrated.

(28) We believe in all of these things, and We are certain that everything comes from Him.

(29) (And we believe and are certain) that Muḥammad is His chosen Servant (*'abd*), His elect Prophet (*nabī*) and His Messenger (*rasūl*), with whom He is well-pleased.

(30) And he is the seal of the prophets.

(31) He is Leader (*imām*) of the Pious.

(32) He is Chief of the Messengers.

(33) He is very dear to the Lord of the Worlds.

(34) All claims to prophecy after him are false (*ghayy*) and fanciful (*hawa*).

(35) He has been sent to all jinns and all mankind with truth, guidance, light and illumination.

(36) The Qur'ān is the word of Allah.

(37) Anyone who attributes something human to Allah is an infidel.

(38) The seeing of Allah by the people of Paradise is factual, without their vision being all-encompassing and without the manner of their vision being known.

(39) The foundation of Islam is not made firm except with the support of unreserved assent and submission to Allah.

(40) He Who seeks knowledge that has been barred from him, and whose intellect is not prepared to surrender, will be veiled from a pure understanding of Allah's unity, clear knowledge and correct faith.

(41) He sways (*yatadhabdhab*) between faith and disbelief, confirmation and denial, and acceptance and rejection. He will be

subject to vain suggestions, perplexed and lost, neither a sincere Believer nor an open denier.

(42) The belief of a person in the seeing of Allah by the people of Paradise is not correct if that person tries to imagine what it is like or if he tries to interpret it according to his own understanding, since the interpretation of this seeing or the meaning of any of the subtle phenomena which are in the realm of Lordship, is by avoiding its interpretation and strictly adhering to submission. This is the faith of Islam. Those who do not refrain from negating Allah's attributes or conceiving them on human patterns are surely mistaken, they are unable to glorify Allah properly.

(43) Those who do not refrain from *nafī* (negating the attributes of Allah) and *tashbiḥ* (imagining Allah's attributes to be like human attributes) go astray and fail to glorify Allah properly.

(44) For our Lord is qualified with the attributes (*ṣifāt*) of uniqueness (*waḥdānīyyah*) and the characteristics (*nu'ūt*) of absolute singularity (*fardānīyyah*). No created being shares with Him these attributes.

(45) Allah is supremely exalted from definition of Him or from being restricted, or from needing any parts, limbs or instruments. He is not bound by the six directions of space as all created beings are.

(46) The ascension (*mi'rāj*) of the Prophet (peace be on him) is a fact. He was taken in person for a journey by night, and lifted awake and in body to the heavens, and from there to such heights as Allah pleased. Allah showered upon him His favors as He pleased and revealed to him what He liked. His heart did not falsify what his eyes saw. Blessed is he in this life and in the Hereafter.

(47) *Al-Ḥawḍ* (the Fountain), which Allah will grant the Prophet (peace be upon him) as an honor to quench the thirst of his nation, is factual.

(48) *Ash-Shifā'ah* (intercession) that has been prepared on their (the Muslims') behalf is also a fact, as has been reported in the aḥādīth.

(49) The covenant that Allah made with Adam and his descendants is a fact.

(50) Allah knows from eternity and knows in an instant the number of people who will go to Paradise and the number that will go to Hell. They will neither be increased or decreased (from what He knows). Similarly, He knows the acts which anyone will do.

(51) Everyone is eased to what he was created for, and it is the action with which a man's life is sealed which dictates his fate. Those who are fortunate are fortunate by the decree of Allah. Likewise, those who are wretched are wretched by the decree of Allah.

(52) The exact nature of Allah's decree is Allah's secret in His creation. Neither any angel near the Throne nor any sent messenger has been given any knowledge of it. To delve into it or reflect too much about it only leads to destruction and loss, and results in rebelliousness. One should take every precaution concerning such investigation, thought, and allowing of doubts to appear. Verily, Allah has withheld the knowledge of qadr from His creatures and He has prohibited them from seeking it. Allah says in His Book, "He is not questioned for His acts, but they are questioned" [21:23]. Therefore, if one asks, why He did that, he has rejected the command of the Book, and whoever rejects the command of the Book becomes an infidel.

(53) This is all that people with enlightened hearts need to know, people who are devoted servants of Allah, and constitutes the degree of those firmly grounded in knowledge. Verily, knowledge is of two types: one existent (or accessible) in creation and one inaccessible in creation. To deny the knowledge that is existent is infidelity; to claim the knowledge that is inaccessible is also infidelity. Faith is not confirmed until a person accepts the knowledge that is existent and abandons seeking the knowledge which is inaccessible.

(54) We believe in the Pen, the Tablet and all that is written on it.

(55) If all creation gathered together to prevent something that Allah has decreed will occur, they would not be able to prevent it. And if they all gathered together to have something done that Allah has decreed will not occur, they would not be able to do it. The Pen has finished writing whatever will occur until the Last Day.

(56) What has missed someone was not to befall him, and what has befallen him was not to miss him.

(57) Everyone must know that Allah already knows everything that is going to happen in His creation and has fixed their measures definitively and irrevocably. There is nothing He has created in either the heavens or the earth that can contradict it, add to it, erase it, change it, decrease or increase it in any way.

(58) This is a fundamental aspect of faith, a necessary aspect of knowledge and of our realizing Allah's Oneness and Lordship. As Allah has said, "He created all things and ordained them in due measures" [25:2]; and, "Allah's command is always a decided decree" [33:38].

(59) So woe to those who quarrel about fore-ordainment, who delve into it with a diseased heart, trying to unravel its profound mysteries through delusions, and who land themselves deep in sin by their baseless, lying conjectures.

(60) The Throne and the Footstool are realities.

(61) Allah is not in need of the Throne and what is beneath it. He encompasses all and is above everything. His creation is not able to encompass Him.

(62) We say with faith, affirmation and submission that Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend and that He spoke directly to Moses.

(63) We believe in the angels, the prophets and the books that were sent down to the messengers. We bear witness that they were all following the path of manifest truth.

(64) As for all those who face our *qiblah* (*ahl qiblatinā*), we call them *muslim* and *mu'min*, so long as they profess what the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught, and believe in whatever he said or enjoined.

(65) We neither enter into vain talk about Allah nor do we dispute obstinately on the matters of His religion.

(66) We do not dispute about the Qur'ān. We bear witness that it is the speech of the Lord of the Worlds, which the faithful spirit brought down and communicated to Muḥammad, the leader of the messengers (may Allah's blessings be upon him and all of his

family). It is the speech of Allah, the Most High, which no speech of any created being can match. We do not believe that it was created, and we avoid going against the belief of the Muslim community.

(67) We do not charge anyone of the *ahl al-qiblah* with being an infidel (*kāfir*) for committing a sin, unless he considers it to be lawful. Nor do we say that sin will not harm the sinner merely because he has faith.

(68) We hope that the righteous among the Believers will receive Allah's pardon and be sent to Paradise through His mercy, but we cannot be certain about them. We cannot testify that they will certainly go to Paradise. As for wrongdoers, we pray to Allah to forgive them. Although we do fear for them, we are not in despair for them.

(69) Anyone who feels secure (from Allah's punishment) or who loses hope (in His mercy) falls outside the realm of Islam. The correct course for the *ahl al-qiblah* lies in between these two ways.

(70) One does not leave the realm of *īmān* except by repudiating what brought him into it.

(71) *Īmān* (faith) is to profess with the tongue and believe in the heart that all that the Prophet (peace be on him) is authentically known to have said or enjoined is true. Imān is one, and with regard to its essence all Believers are equal. They differ only with respect to their fear of Allah and piety, abstention from following evil desires and pursuance of what is best.

(72) All Believers are friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah, the All-Merciful.

(73) the most honored of them (the Believers) in the sight of Allah are those who obey Him most and follow the Qur'ān best.

(74) *Īmān* is faith in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and that everything, good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant, is ordained by Allah.

(75) We believe in all these things. We never discriminate between one messenger and another. We also believe that whatever they have taught is true.

(76) Those of the *ummah* of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, who commit grave sins (*kabā'ir*) will not stay in Hell forever, even if they do not repent, provided they die while Believers in Allah's unity and meet Allah knowing Him. They will be absolutely at His will and judgment. He may forgive and pardon them out of His mercy if He wills, as He has said in His book, "And He will forgive anything other than it (*shirk*) to whom He please" [4:48]. Or He may punish them in the Fire, as is required by His justice, and then, out of pity and the intercession of His obedient servants, take them out thereof and put them in His Paradise. This is because Allah is the Protector and Patron of those who know Him. He never treats them in either of the two worlds like those who deny Him and who are bereft of His guidance and have failed to obtain His protection. O Allah, Protector of Islam and the Muslims! Keep us in Islam until we meet You.

(77) We believe that prayer may be offered behind any person from among the *ahl al-qiblah*, whether he is righteous or impious. We also believe in performing the funeral prayer over them upon their deaths.

(78) We do not "place" any one of them in Paradise or in Hell.

(79) Nor do we charge anyone with not having faith (*kufr*) or *shirk* or hypocrisy (*nifāq*), as long as they do not openly demonstrate anything of that nature. We leave what they believe or do in private to Allah.

(80) We do not believe in taking up the sword against any of the *ummah* of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, except upon those for whom it is obligatory.

(81) We do not believe in revolt against our leaders and rulers, even if they commit injustice, nor do we pray against them or defy their orders. On the contrary, we believe that obedience to them is a duty and a part of our obedience to Allah, so long as they do not order anything sinful. We pray for their safety and piety.

(82) We follow the Sunnah and the *jamā'ah*, and avoid disagreement, dissension and sectarianism.

(83) We love those who are just and the honest, and we hate those who are unjust and dishonest.

(84) Whenever something is not clear to us we say Allah knows better.

(85) We believe that it is correct to wipe over leather socks, whether one is traveling or resident, as has been mentioned in the *ḥadīth*.

(86) *Ḥajj* and *jihād* will continue until the Last Day under all Muslim authorities (*ulī al-amr*), pious or impious. They will never be suspended or abrogated.

(87) We believe in the honorable angels that note down (our deeds). Allah has appointed them to keep watch over us.

(88) We believe in the Angel of Death, who has been charged with taking out the souls of the people.

(89) We believe that some people may be punished in their graves if they deserve it, and that Munkar and Nakīr will question people about their Lord, their religion and their Prophet, as has been reported by the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) and the Companions. We believe that the grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of the Hell-fire.

(90) We believe in resurrection after death and in recompense of deeds on the Day of Judgment. People will be have their deeds presented and will be accountable for them. They will be given their records to read, and will be rewarded or punished. (We also believe) in the Bridge (*ṣirāṭ*) and the Balance (*mizān*).

(91) Paradise and Hell have been created and will never perish or pass away. Allah created them before the world. He allotted some people for each. Those whom He allotted for Paradise, He did so out of His bounty for them. And those whom He allotted for Hell, He allotted because it was required by His justice. Everyone will do what has been chosen for him, and will go to the place for which he has been created. Good and evil both have been determined for each and every person.

(92) The power needed to perform a duty is a gift from Allah, not an attribute possessed by man, and exists only with the action.

However, power in the sense of health, potential, ability and fitness of the organs is prior to action and is the basis of obligation. "Allah does not place on any person a burden greater than he can bear" [2:286].

(93) Human actions are created by Allah, although they are acquired by man.

(94) Allah does not impose actions upon human beings except what they can do, and they are only able to do what He has imposed upon them. This is the meaning of the Prophet's words, "There is no power and no strength save in Allah." We believe that no one can do anything or move anything, or abstain from any sin except with the help of Allah, nor can anyone obey His command and persevere in obedience except by His grace. Everything happens according to His will, knowledge, decree and planning. His will rules over all wills and His decree prevails over all planning. He does what He pleases and He never commits injustice. "He is not to be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs)" [21:23].

(95) We believe that the dead benefit from the prayers and charities offered by the living on their behalf.

(96) Allah answers prayers and fulfills needs.

(97) He controls everything, and nothing controls Him. Without Him nothing can survive for an instant. Whoever turns away from Him, even for the blinking of an eye, is ungrateful and courts His doom (*ḥayn*).

(98) Allah becomes angry and pleased, but not like any created being.

(99) We love all the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him), but we do not love any one of them to excess, nor do we disown any of them. We hate those who hate them or speak ill of them. We always mention them in positive terms, and believe that to love them is part of the religion, part of *īmān* and *iḥsān*; and that to hate them is infidelity, hypocrisy and transgression.

(100) We affirm that, after the Prophet (peace be on him), the first rightful heir to the *khilāfah* was Abū Bakr, on the grounds that he was the best and the most eminent of all the *ummah*.

(101) The second heir to the *khilāfah* was 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him.

(102) The third heir to the *khilāfah* was 'Uthmān, may Allah be pleased with him.

(103) The fourth heir to the *khilāfah* was 'Alī, may Allah be pleased with him.

(104) They are the right-principled caliphs and the rightly guided imāms.

(105) We believe that the ten Companions, those whom the Prophet (peace be on him) named and gave the glad tidings that they would go to Paradise, will go to Paradise, as he said, and what he said is true. Those Companions are: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Talḥah, Az-Zubayr, Sa'd, Sa'īd, 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf and Abū 'Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarrāḥ, "the trustee of this *ummah*". May Allah be pleased with them all.

(106) Whoever speaks well of the Prophet's Companions, his pure and pious wives - free from any impurity - and his noble and righteous descendants - free from any impurity - is free from hypocrisy.

(107) The scholars of the Elders and their successors, whether they are *ḥadīth* and tradition scholars or scholars of *fiqh* and rational sciences, should not be mentioned except in good terms. Whoever speaks ill of them is not on the right path.

(108) We do not exalt any friend (*walī*) of Allah over any one of His prophets, peace and blessings be upon them. On the contrary, we believe that a single prophet (*nabī*) is greater than all the walis combined.

(109) We believe in the miracles (*karamāt*) that have proceeded from them and have been reported by reliable reporters.

(110) We believe in the signs of the Hour, such as the emergence of the Great Liar (*ad-Dajjāl*), the descent of Jesus son of Mary from Heaven, and we believe in the rising of the sun from the west, and the appearance of the Beast of the Earth from its place.

(111) We do not believe in diviners and fortune-tellers, nor do we believe in those who expound ideas incompatible with the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the consensus of the *ummah*.

(112) We believe that keeping together (*jamā'ah*) is the true and correct path, and that disunity leads to deviation and torment.

(113) the religion of Allah in the heavens and on the earth is one, and it is the dīn of Islam. Allah has said, "Verily the religion before Allah is Islam" [5:3]; and, "(Allah) has chosen for you as your religion Islam" [5:3]. Islam steers a course between excess and negligence, between anthropomorphism and negation, between coercionism and libertarianism, between complacency and despair.

(114) This is our faith and our religion in form and spirit. We have nothing to do with those who differ from what we have said and elaborated. We pray to Allah that He may confirm us in faith, let us die upon it, save us from erroneous ideas and heretical doctrines such as those advanced by the anthropomorphists (*mushabbihah*), Mu'tazilah, Jahmīyyah, determinists (*jabarīyyah*), free-willers (*qadarīyyah*), and others who have differed from the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah and fallen into error. We have nothing to do with them. In our view, they are astray in their thinking and wrongdoers. And to Allah we turn for guidance and safety.

The *Creed* and its Commentary

(1) We say about the Unity of Allah – with Allah's help – that Allah is one, without any partners.

One must know that *tawḥīd* is the first matter the prophets preached. It is the first step on the path and the first stage of the journey to Allah. Allah stated, "We sent Noah to his people and he said, 'My people, serve Allah; you have no other god than He" [7:59]. Hūd said similar words to his people, "Serve Allah, there is no god for you but He" [7:65]. Ṣāliḥ said to his people, "Worship Allah as you have no god but He" [7:73]. Shu'ayb said to his people, "Worship Allah; you have no god but He" [7:85]. Allah also says, "We sent to every community a prophet saying, 'Worship Allah and avoid false gods" [16:36], and, "Not a messenger did We send before you (Muḥammad) without Our revealing to him that there is no god but I, so worship and serve Me" [21:25]. The Prophet (peace be on him) also stated, "I have been commanded to fight people until they accept that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His prophet."[1]

Therefore, it is correct to say that the first obligation upon a person is to witness that there is no god except Allah. He is not required to reflect, to intend to reflect or to be skeptical at first, as the leaders of the censured *kalām* have stated. In fact, all the leaders of the Elders agree that the first thing one must do is witness to the unity of Allah and the prophethood of Muḥammad (peace be on him). They also agree that if a child did that before he reached the age of puberty, he is not commanded to repeat the witnessing after attaining puberty. Instead, he is commanded to ritually purify himself and pray when he reaches puberty or is able to ascertain things, according to those who hold this latter opinion. None of them requires his guardian to address him at that time and tell him to repeat his act of witnessing to the faith, even though that is the first duty of a Muslim and a necessary condition for performing the prayer. But he, in fact, has already fulfilled that obligation.

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[1] Al-Bukhārī, 25; Muslim, 22; At-Tirmidhī, 2606; Abū Dāwūd, 2640; An-Nasā'ī, *Sunan* (with commentary by Jalāl ad-Dīn As-Suyūṭī and gloss by As-Sindī; Beirut: Dār Iḥyā at-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1384/1930; henceforth referred to as An-Nasā'ī), Chapter Zakāh, vol. 5, p. 14.

The jurists have also discussed the case of the person who prays but has not made the testimony of faith (the two *shahādahs*) or performs some aspect of Islam without the testimony. Is such a person a Muslim? The correct opinion is that he becomes a Muslim by fulfilling all the deeds that are particular to Islam.

With *tawḥīd* one enters into Islam, and with it one will depart from this world. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "He whose last words are 'There is no god except Allah,' will enter Paradise."[2] It is, therefore, the first duty and the last duty.

tawḥīd is, then, the beginning of the matter and its end. What is meant by this is *tawḥīd al-ilāhīyyah*, or the belief in the unity of God (as the only object of worship). For *tawḥīd* has three dimensions to it: first, matters concerning the attributes of Allah; second, *tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah* (the oneness of His Lordship), which states that Allah alone created everything; and third, *tawḥīd al-ilāhīyyah* or the oneness of His Godhead, that Allah alone is to be worshiped and served without associating any partner to Him.

The first category of *tawḥīd* concerns the attributes of Allah. Those who deny the attributes include the denial of attributes as part of what they call *tawḥīd*. Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān and those who agree with him say that affirming the attributes requires more than one necessary being. Such a statement is known to be obviously and blatantly wrong, for a being devoid of all attributes cannot have a real existence. It is an impossibility, a mere fancy of mind, an absolute void. This view of *tawḥīd* led some people to the doctrine of incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and union (*ittiḥād*), which is far worse than the heresy of the Christians. The Christians at least limit the divinity to Christ, while these people extend it to all of creation.

A number of evil consequences follow from this false understanding of *tawḥīd*. For example, Pharaoh and his followers become perfect Believers and the best gnostics of the truth of Allah. The idol worshipers are also considered correct and faithful since they were actually worshiping Allah and no one else. Similarly, there is no longer any difference between the lawful and the unlawful, between (marrying or having intercourse with) a mother or sister and a non-related woman; there is no difference between water and alcohol nor between adultery and marriage. They are all from one and the same essence. In fact, they are all one and the

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[2]Abū Dāwūd, 3116; Aḥmad, 5:223, 247; Ibn Ḥibban, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. by 'Abdur-Raḥmān Muḥammad 'Uthmān and Muḥammad 'Abdul-Muḥsin Al-Kutubī (Madinah: Al-Maktab as-Salafīyyah, 1390/1970; henceforth referred to as Ibn Ḥibban), *ḥadīth* no. 719.

same Being. This doctrine also finds fault with the prophets, since they curtailed the freedom of the people and made things difficult for them. Exalted is Allah high above what they say.

The second category of *tawḥīd*, *tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah*, is to believe that He alone is the Creator of everything. There are not two creators equal in attributes and actions. This *tawḥīd* is definitely true without any doubt. It is the goal (or final belief) of many philosophers, theologians, and some Ṣūfis. No known people have ever denied the truthfulness of this kind of *tawḥīd*. In fact, hearts have an inherent tendency to believe in it, more so than for any other truth or existence. The messengers, as Allah mentions, questioned their people about this belief in the following manner, "Is there any doubt about the existence of Allah, the Originator of the Heavens and the Earth?" [14:10]

The person most famous for claiming his ignorance or rejection of the existence of the Creator was Pharaoh. But in his inner soul, he was actually sure of it. Moses said to him, "You do know that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these [signs] as eye-openers" [17:102]. And Allah stated the following about Pharaoh and his people, "Their hearts were convinced of it, but they denied it arrogantly and unjustly" [27:14]. That is why, when Pharaoh said, "'Who is the Lord of the Worlds?'" as if rejecting it, he was actually aware of Him, so Moses said to him, "'(He is) the Lord and Cherisher of the Heavens and the Earth and all that is between them, if you want to believe.' (Thereupon Pharaoh) said to those around him, 'Do you hear what he says?' (Moses) said, '(He is) your Lord and the Lord of your fathers and your forefathers.' (Pharaoh) said, 'Your messenger who has been sent to you is certainly crazed.' (Moses) said, 'Lord of the East and the West and all in between, if you want to understand.'" [26:24-28]

Some people claim that Pharaoh asked Moses about the nature of Allah and since one cannot talk about His nature, Moses could not answer his question. This is wrong. Pharaoh did not put the question to Moses to elicit any information about God, but only to deny His existence. The other verses of the Qur'ān show that Phraraoh was denying or refusing to admit God's existence. It is not true that he confessed to God's existence and only wanted to know more about Him. This is why Moses, in his answer, assumed that God was known to him and he did not try to prove His existence, as the signs of God's existence and the proofs of His Lordship are so obvious that no one would ask about who He is. His existence is too well-known, clear and obvious for anyone to be ignorant of Him. The knowledge of His existence is inherent in man more than any other truth.

We know of no people who have ever said that there are two creators of the world equal in attributes and actions. Even the dualist Magians and Manichaeists, who affirm two principles, light and darkness and believe that the world has proceeded from them, agree that light is better than darkness; it is the praiseworthy god, while darkness is evil. They dispute over whether darkness is eternal or contingent. Therefore, they do not affirm two equal lords.

As for the Christians, who believe in the Trinity, they do not affirm three separate lords for the world. Rather, they agree that the creator of the world is one and they say, "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost" as one God. But this belief in the triune God is self-contradictory, and their belief in incarnation is even worse. That is why they have great differences regarding its interpretation. No one has been able to produce an intelligible view, and no two views agree with each other. They believe that He is one as essence, three as hypostases; but then they differ about the nature of the hypostases. Some conceive them as properties, others as qualities, and still others as persons. Every human being knows in the light of his natural reason that this is false. In any case, they do not say that there are two Creators similar to one another.

The point here is that there have never been any people who have affirmed the existence of two equal creators. In spite of all that, many theologians and philosophers have tired themselves out trying to prove the fact that there is only one Creator. Some of them have admitted that it cannot be proven by rational argument and claim that it is something that is known only through revelation.

The most common argument they advance is known as the argument of exclusion. This argument runs like this. If there were two creators and they disagreed about something, such as one wanted to move X, whereas the other did not want it to be moved, or one wanted to make Y a living being, whereas the other wanted to make it lifeless, then, logically speaking, there are only three possibilities. First, the wills of the two are both carried out; second, only the will of one of them is carried out; third, the will of neither of them is carried out. The first case is not possible because it requires the existence of contraries. The third possibility is also ruled out because it would imply that a body is neither moving nor not moving and this is impossible. This would also imply that both of them are incapable of carrying out their wills, which would disqualify them from being God. Finally, if the will of one is realized and not that of the other, he alone will deserve to be God and the one whose will is not realized cannot be considered God. For a fuller treatment of this argument, one may consult the relevant books.

Many people think that this argument is implied in the verse, "Had there been gods other than Allah, the Heavens and the Earth would have collapsed" [21:22]. The cause of their misunderstanding is their belief that the unity of lordship (*tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah*) which they try to prove is the same as the unity of Godhead (*tawḥīd al-ilāhīyyah*) which the Qur'ān states and which the prophets preached. But this is not so. The *tawḥīd* which the prophets preached and which their books teach is the *tawḥīd al-ilāhīyyah*, which encompasses or includes the *tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah*. It means to worship and to serve Allah without ascribing any partner to Him. The Arab polytheists and pagans affirmed the notion of *tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah* and that the Creator of the heavens and the earth is one. Allah states about them, "If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will say, 'Allah'" [31:25], and "Say (to them): To whom does the earth and all upon it belong, if you truly know? They will say, 'To Allah.' Say (to them then): Will you not then receive admonition?" [23:84-85]. There are many verses of this nature in the Qur'ān.

They did not believe about their idols that they participated with Allah in the creation of the world. Their beliefs were the same as those of the other polytheists of the world, the Indians, Turks, Berbers and others. Sometimes they believed that their idols represented some pious men, prophets or saints who would intercede for them with Allah and bring them closer to Allah. This was the root of the polytheism of the Arabs. In talking about the people of Noah, Allah states, "They said: 'Do not abandon your gods; abandon not Wadd, nor Suwa's, nor Yaghuth, nor Ya'uq, nor Naṣr" [71:23]. It is confirmed in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Al-Bukhārī, the books of Qur'ānic commentary, narratives of the prophets and elsewhere, from Ibn 'Abbās and other Elders, that those were the names of some pious people among the people of Noah. When they died, the people gathered over their graves, then put up their statues and after a period of time they began to worship them. And these particular idols were passed on to the Arab tribes. Ibn 'Abbās mentions where they went to tribe by tribe.[3]

It is confirmed in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* on the authority of Abū Al-Hayyāj Al-Asadī that 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib said to him, "Shall I send you on a mission like the mission the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) sent me on? He commanded me not to leave any elevated

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[3]Al-Bukhārī, *Tafsīr,* 4920; Jawwād 'Alī, *Tārīkh al-'Arab qabl al-Islām* (Beirut: Dār Al-Malāyīn and Baghdad: Maktabat an-Nahḍah, 1976), vol. VI, pp. 227-235.

grave but to raze it to the ground, and not to leave any idol except to demolish it."[4]

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim it is also recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said during his fatal illness, "May Allah curse the Jews and Christians who took the grave sites of their prophets as places of worship." He was warning against what they had done. Commenting on this *ḥadīth*, 'Ā'ishah said, "If the Prophet had not warned us against this, his grave would have been elevated, but he abhorred that his grave should be made a place of worship."[5]

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim it is also recorded that while on his deathbed, someone mentioned to the Prophet (peace be on him) some church in Abyssinia and described its beauty and icons. He (peace be on him) said, "Whenever a pious person died in their community they erected a church on his grave and decorated it with icons. They will be the worst people in Allah's sight on the Day of Judgment."[6]

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) stated, some five days before he died, "Beware! The people before you used to make the graves of their prophets and pious people a worshiping ground. Beware! Do not make graves into mosques. I strictly forbid you to do so."[7]

Another cause of *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) is the worship of the stars. People build idols symbolizing their properties and then worship them. It is said that the *shirk* of the people of Abraham was of this nature. Similarly, there is associating partners with Allah by (taking) angels and jinns (as Allah's partners) and using idols to worship them.

Such people affirmed the existence of the Creator and did not claim that there were two creators for this world. But they took these idols as intermediaries to intercede for them. Allah Himself said about such people, "Those who take as protectors other than Allah say that they only worship them in order that they might bring them

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[4]Muslim, *Janā'iz*, 969; Abū Dāwūd, *Janā'iz*, 3218; At-Tirmidhī, *Janā'iz*, 1049; An-Nasā'ī, *Janā'iz*, 4:88, 89; Aḥmad, 1: 96, 129.

[5]Al-Bukhārī, 1330, 1390; Muslim, *Masājid,* 529; Abū Dāwūd, *Janā'iz*, 3227; An-Nasā'ī, 4:95-96; Aḥmad 6:80, 121, 146, 252.

[6]Al-Bukhārī, 427, 434; Muslim, *Masājid,* 528; An-Nasā'ī, *Masājid,* 2:41-42; Aḥmad, 6:51.

[7]Muslim, *Masājid,* 532; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, ed. by 'Abdul-Hāmid As-Salafī (Baghdad: Iḥyā li at-Turāth al-Islāmī and Dār al-'Arabīyyah, first edition, 1398/1978; henceforth referred to as Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* ḥadīth no. 1686.

nearer to God" [39:3]. He also says, "They serve besides Allah things that neither hurt them nor profit them and say: 'These are our intercessors with Allah.' Say: Do you indeed inform Allah of something He knows not in the heavens or on earth? Glory to Him, and far is He above the partners they ascribe to Him" [10:18].

Similar was the case with the previous polytheistic nations who denied the messengers. Concerning the story of Ṣāliḥ, Allah states that the nine groups of people swore by Allah that they would attack Ṣāliḥ and his family at night. Those evil-doing polytheists swore by Allah that they would kill their prophet and his family, thus establishing that they believed in Allah – (but a belief in the manner) of polytheists.

It is clear, therefore, that the *tawḥīd* which is desired or which is the goal is *tawḥīd al-ilāhīyyah*,which encompasses and includes *tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah*. Allah has stated, "Therefore turn your face resolutely toward the Faith, the handiwork of Allah, on whose pattern He created mankind. (There can be) no changing the creation brought about by Allah. This is the Way of life, straight and upright. Yet most people do not know. Turn back in repentance to Him and fear Him. Establish regular prayers and be not among those who join gods with Allah, Who split up their religion and become mere sects – each party rejoicing in what is with itself. When trouble touches men, they cry to their Lord, turning back to Him in repentance. But when He gives them a taste of mercy as from Himself, behold, some of them pay part worship to other gods besides their Lord, as if to show their ingratitude for the favors We have bestowed on them. Then enjoy (your brief day). Soon will you know your folly. Have We sent down an authority to them which calls upon them to set up associates (with God)? When We give the people a taste of mercy they rejoice in it; but when adversity strikes them due to the consequences of their deeds, then they fall into despair" [30:30-36]. Allah also says, "Is there any doubt about the existence of Allah, the Originator of the Heavens and the Earth?" [14:10]

The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Every child is born with *fiṭrah* (the natural way, the religion of Islam). Thereafter, his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian."[8] This *ḥadīth* does not mean that a child is born like a clean slate, completely unaware of *tawḥīd* or *shirk*, as some people say. The verses above negate this claim (as they show that the natural religion that the child is born

[8]Al-Bukhārī, 1358, 1359; Muslim, *Al-Qadr*, 2658; Aḥmad, 2:233, 275, 393, 410, 481; At-Tirmidhī, 2138.

with is Islam). Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be on him) narrated from Allah, "I created My servants with a mind to serve none but Me. Thereafter, the devils grab them...."[9] The same idea is alluded to in the previously quoted *ḥadīth*. For along with the words, "Then they make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian," the Prophet (peace be on him) did not say, "or a Muslim". In other narrations of the *ḥadīth*, it states, "is born in the *millah*" or "or in this *millah*,"[10] that means faith.

What the Prophet (peace be on him) stated is also supported by sound rational arguments.

(From among those sound rational arguments) is the following. It is stated that man has beliefs and volitions that are sometimes true and sometimes wrong. He is moved by will or volition. Therefore, he must have at least one of them and he must have some way of deciding on one over the other. We know that if you give a choice to anyone to be truthful and beneficent or lying and harmful he will incline by his nature to being truthful and beneficent. Therefore, recognition of the Creator and belief in Him is truth or its opposite is truth. The latter is definitely not the case; the former must be true. Therefore, there must be something in the person's nature that requires him to know the Creator and believe in Him. Furthermore, it must be the case that having love for Him, the Creator, is either beneficent to the servant or not. The second is definitely not true. It must be the case that he has in his nature a love for what benefits him.

(Another rational argument) is that the person is by nature driven to seek benefit and ward off harm by his senses. Even if not everyone's soul by itself is sufficient to achieve that, but instead he needs some assistance for his natural endowment, such as teaching, then if this condition is met and obstacles are not present, the soul will respond, due to the built-in forces it has.

Similarly, one could say that it is known that every soul is capable of receiving knowledge and yearning for truth. But just teaching and exhortation by themselves do not necessitate knowledge or will unless the soul has the power to accept it. If someone teaches ignorant people or animals and exhorts them, they will not respond. It is also known that the soul, without any external influence, can believe in the possibility of a creator. The soul is sufficient for that. If that driving force is present in the soul and we

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[9]Muslim, *Al-Jannah*, 2867; Aḥmad, 4:162, 163, 266; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 987-996.

[10]These words occur in the *ḥadīth* of Muslim referred to in the previous footnote.

assume that there is no obstacle, then the driving force which is presented with no obstacles will bring about its goal. Therefore, it is concluded that the pure soul or pure human endowment, if met with nothing that corrupts it, will affirm the existence of a creator and will be a servant to Him.

As a corollary to the above, one can argue that if the natural human endowment does not meet with any positive or negative external factors, the natural disposition will drive him to what is good, as the built-in force that allows him to accept knowledge and will is present, while the obstacles are not present.

It is said of Abū Ḥanīfah that a group of the people of *kalām* came to him to discuss the unity of the Creator and the Lord (*tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah*). He said to them, "Before we enter into a discussion on this question, tell me what you think of a boat in the Euphrates which goes to shore, loads itself with food and other things, then returns, anchors and unloads all by itself without anyone sailing or controlling it?" They said, "That it is impossible; it could never happen." Thereupon he said to them, "If it is impossible with respect to a ship, how is it possible for this whole world, with all its vastness, to move by itself?" This story has also been narrated from people other than Abū Ḥanīfah.

However, if anyone believes in the unity of the Creator-Lord (*tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah*) which theologians and philosophers expound, and in whose ecstatic experience many Ṣūfis try to lose their self-consciousness, considering it to be the end of their pursuit, as the author of *Manāzil as-Sa'irin* and others have stated, but, if at the same time he does not serve Allah alone and eschew the worship of anything else, then he is a polytheist like any other polytheist.

The Qur'ān abounds with statements and parables concerning this type of *tawḥīd*. It first affirms the *tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah*, that there is no Creator other than Allah. That requires or necessitates that no one should be worshiped except Allah. It takes the first proposition as evidence for the second proposition. The Arabs believed in the first proposition and disputed the second. Allah then made it clear to them: Since you know that there is no creator except Allah, and that He is the One Who can give a person what benefits him or keep away from him what harms him, and He has no partner in those acts, then how can you worship others besides Him and associate partners with Him in His Godhead?

For example, Allah says in the Qur'ān, "Say: Praise be to Allah and peace be on His servants whom He has chosen (for His message). Who is better: God, or the false gods they associate with Him? Or who has created the heavens and the earth, and who sends

you down rain from the sky with which He brings forth beautiful gardens? It is not in your power to cause the growth of the trees in them. Can there be another god besides Allah? Yet they are a people who assign equals (to Him)" [27:59-60].

At the end of other, similar verses, Allah states, "Can there by another god besides Allah?" [21:6, 63 and 64]. This is a rhetorical question whose answer is definitely in the negative. They accepted the notion that no one but Allah does such things. Allah used that as a proof against them. It does not mean to ask if there is another god besides Allah, as some have claimed. Such a meaning is inconsistent with the context of the verses and since the people actually used to take other gods alongside Allah. As Allah says, "Can you possibly bear witness that besides Allah there is another god? Say: I witness it not" [6:19]. And they used to say (about the Prophet), "Does he make all the gods one? That is truly a strange thing" [38:5]. But they would never say that there was another god (with Allah) that would "make the earth a fixed abode, place rivers in its fold, and place firm hills therein" [16:61]. They accepted the fact that only Allah did all those things. Therefore, Allah says, "People, adore your Guardian-Lord, Who created you and those who went before you that you may learn to be righteous" [2:21], and "Say: Think, if Allah took away your hearing and your sight and sealed up your hearts, who, a god other than Allah, could restore them to you?" [6:46]. And there are similar other verses.

Since *tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah*, which the theologians and those Ṣūfis who are in agreement with them consider to be the end-all and goal of their endeavor, is part of the *tawḥīd* which the prophets preached and the heavenly books teach, various evidence exists that point to it, such as other evidence that prove the existence of the Creator and the truthfulness of the Prophet. By Allah's mercy to His creation, the truths that are most important and most needed have the most evident proofs.

Allah has given parables of every kind that contain rational arguments and promote faith. He has narrated stories which teach and discuss signs and proofs. And what is other than truth except error? The Qur'ān makes the truth clear with evidence. However, those premises that are well known and agreed upon are built upon without any need for proving them. The most correct form of exposition in language is that of ellipsis and that is the manner used in the Qur'ān, as opposed to what the ignorant say claiming that there are no demonstrative arguments in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān, though, does state all the premises when they are not clear or when there is some dispute about them.

Since associating partners with Allah in His Lordship is impossible, according to all peoples, that is, the confirmation of two creators similar in attributes and actions, some of the polytheists advanced the claim that there is another creator that created part of this world. This is what the dualists say concerning "darkness", what the Qadarīyyah say about the actions of animals and what the naturalist philosophers say about the movement of the planets, souls and physical bodies. All of them posit events that are not brought into existence by Allah, and associate partners with Him in the act of creation. They are polytheists in some aspects of *rubūbīyyah*. In fact, many of the Arab polytheists and others thought that their idols could bring about some good or cause some harm even if Allah did not bring such good or harm into existence.

Since that type of *shirk* was found among the people, the Qur'ān makes clear its falsehood. Allah says, "No son did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with Him. If there were many gods, each would have taken away what he had created, and some would have lorded it over others" [23:92]. Reflect on this wonderful argument so briefly and clearly stated: The true God has to be the Creator and the Actor, causing good and warding off evil from His creatures. If there were another god besides Him, sharing in His powers, that other god would also create and act, and he would not be pleased with that partnership. In fact, if he could dominate and subjugate the partner and bring everything under his control, he would have done so. If he were not able to do that, he would have created things by himself and kept all his creation to himself, as the kings of the world keep their kingdoms to themselves when they are not able to subjugate others. Therefore, one of three situations must exist: first, every god keeps his creation and kingdom to himself; second, some dominate others; third, they are all subjugated by the All-Powerful Lord, Who deals with them as He pleases. They are not able to defy Him but must, instead, simply submit to His authority and carry out His command. Therefore, they will actually simply be His servants and bondsmen and He will be the one and only one true God.

The order of the world and its perfect rule is the best argument that its Ruler is only one God, the one King and the one Lord, and that there is no god and no lord of creation other than He. The argument of exclusion says not only that the Creator of the world is only one, but also that He alone is the Lord and God and no one else. Exclusion applies to creation and action as well as to lordship and divinity. In the same way, if it is not possible for there to be two equal lords and creators, it is also not possible for there to be two gods and two beings deserving worship.

The knowledge that there cannot be two equal creators is part of the natural endowment of man, self-evident to his reason. Human nature similarly rejects the idea of two gods. Hence the verdict of the Qur'ān and the verdict of human nature are one regarding the unity of the Creator-Lord that implies and necessitates the unity of Divinity.

Close in meaning to the above verse is Allah's statement, "If there were many gods therein (that is, in the heavens and the earth) besides Allah, they would have surely fallen into chaos" [21:22]. Some people think that this verse states the above-mentioned argument of exclusion, "If there were two creators...", but they fail to note that the verse refers to gods (*alihah*) and not to creator-lords (*arbab*); furthermore, the verse speaks about the world after its creation. It says that if there were many gods in the world, the heavens and the earth would be destroyed. It also states, "it would fall into chaos" and that refers to after its existence. So the verse argues that there cannot be more than one God, that He cannot be other than Allah, and that the destruction of the heavens and the earth would be bound to follow if gods were many or if the one God were other than Allah, and that the order in which we find the heavens and the earth is because there is only one God, Allah. If there were another god besides Him, the heavens and earth would have disintegrated because their survival depends on the justice on which their foundation has been laid, and the greatest form of injustice is polytheism (*shirk*) and the greatest form of justice is *tawḥīd*.

Tawḥīd *al-ilāhīyyah* implies *tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah* but not vice-versa. One who cannot create is incompetent and one who is incompetent is not deserving of divinity and worship – of being God. Allah says, "Do they associate with Allah those who cannot create anything and who are themselves created" [7:191], "Can the One Who creates and the one who cannot create be equal? Do you not learn the lesson?" [16:17]; and, "If those were gods besides Allah as they claim, they would have tried to reach the Lord of the Throne" [17:42]. Later scholars differ regarding the meaning of the last verse quoted. Some think that it means that if there were gods besides Allah, the Lord of the Throne, they would try to dominate Him.

The second interpretation, which is the correct interpretation coming from the Elders, such as Qatādah and others, and the only interpretation mentioned by Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī, is that the other gods would try to seek His favor. It is similar to another verse in the Qur'ān, "Lo, this is an admonition that whosoever will may choose

a way to his Lord" [76:29]. And He says, "If those were gods besides Allah as they claim..." While such people did not claim that there were two creators they instead took other gods as intercessors with Allah and said, "We worship them only so they may bring us near to Allah" [39:3], which is different from what is stated in the first verse.

The *tawḥīd* which the prophets preached and the heavenly books taught are of two kinds: *tawḥīd* in knowledge and recognition and *tawḥīd* in will and intention. The first is to affirm that God is unique in His essence, attributes, names and acts; that there is nothing like Him in any respect; and that He is as He has said about Himself or as His Prophet (peace be on him) has said about Him. The Qur'ān has expounded this type of *tawḥīd* in the clearest fashion, as may be found in the beginning of Sūrat Al-Ḥadīd (Chapter 57), Tā Hā (Chapter 20), the end of Al-Ḥashr (Chapter 59), the beginning of As-Sajdah (Chapter 32), the beginning of Ālī 'Imrān (Chapter 3), all of Al-Ikhlās (Chapter 112), and so on.

The second type of *tawḥīd*, *tawḥīd* in actions and intention, is described in Al-Kāfirūn (Chapter 109), in the verse, "Say: People of the Book, let us agree to a statement common between you and us..." [3:64], in the first and last parts of Az-Zumar (Chapter 39), in the beginning, middle and end of Yūnus (Chapter 10), in the beginning and end of Al-'Arāf (Chapter 7), and the whole of Al-An'ām (Chapter 6).

Most of the Qur'ān - actually all of it - refers to these two kinds of *tawḥīd*. For the Qur'ān either speaks about Allah, His names, attributes and actions, and this is part of *tawḥīd* in knowledge and affirmation, or it calls people to His worship alone, without ascribing any partners to Him and leaving everything that is worshiped other than Him, and this is *tawḥīd* of intention and action. Or it commands, forbids and requires obedience to Him, and this is all part of the rights or implications of *tawḥīd* and its completion. Concerning what is stated of how Allah honors those who believe in *tawḥīd* and how He treats them in this world and what He honors them with in the Hereafter, all of this is the reward for *tawḥīd*. Concerning what is stated about those who have associated partners with Allah and whom He has punished in this life or will punish in the next, this is the just reward of those who abandon *tawḥīd*.

Thus, the entire Qur'ān is about *tawḥīd*, its consequences and the reward for it, as well as *shirk*, those who commit it and the punishment they will suffer for it. (The opening verses of the first

chapter of the Qur'ān), "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds" is *tawḥīd*; "the Most-Compassionate, the Most-Merciful" is *tawḥīd*; "Master of the Day of Judgment" is *tawḥīd*; "You only do we worship, and in You only do we seek help" is *tawḥīd*; "Guide us to the Straight Path" is *tawḥīd*, as it is a request to be guided to the path of the people of *tawḥīd*, those whom Allah has blessed, "Not those who have earned the wrath of Allah, nor those who have gone astray" or, in other words, those who have forsaken *tawḥīd*.

Furthermore, Allah has himself witnessed to His *tawḥīd* and unity; and His angels, prophets and messengers have witnessed to His unity. Allah says, "There is no god but He. That it is the witness of Allah, His angels and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no god but He, the Exalted in power, the Wise. Truly, the religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His will)" [3:18-19]. This verse underlines the essence of *tawḥīd* and refutes all those who have wrong beliefs. It mentions the greatest, finest and most truthful testimony from the greatest beings to the greatest reality.

The use by the Elders of the word *shāhida* ('bearing witness') revolves around judgment, ruling, informing, clarifying and reporting. All those uses are correct and there is no contradiction between them. For the word *shahādah* encompasses the statement of the witness as well as his report; but it also encompasses his informing, reporting and clarifying. It has four aspects to it: first, knowledge, understanding and belief in the soundness of what is being witnessed to and confirmed; second, speaking or enunciation about what has been witnessed, for even if he does not tell anyone else about it, he mentions it to himself and remembers it or records it; third, to inform others of it, inform them and clarify the matter to them; fourth, that he complies with what it entails and commands him to do.

Allah's testifying to His own Unity and standing firm on justice involves all four aspects: His knowledge of it, His speaking about it, His informing and telling His creation about it and His commanding them to abide and live by it. As for the aspect of knowledge, the testimony, as a must, definitely includes it. Otherwise it would be a testimony without knowledge of what one is testifying to. Allah says, "Except those who bear witness to the truth and are knowledgeable thereof" [43:86]. And the Prophet

(peace be on him) said, "And similarly I bear witness" and he pointed to the sun.[11]

As for the aspect of speaking it, Allah says, "They make the angels, those servants of the Most Merciful, female. Did they witness their creation? Surely their testimony will be recorded and they will be questioned" [43:19]. Allah has stated that to be a testimony from them, even if they did not state it in the form of testimony and even if they did not pass it on to others.

As for the aspect of informing and reporting to others, there are two types, informing by speech and informing by action. That is the case with everyone who wants to inform someone else of something: sometimes he tells him by his speech and sometimes he tells him by his action. For example, the one who designates his house a mosque, opens its doors wide, clears the way to it and allows people to enter it and pray in it, has actually declared that it is a religious endowment (waqf), even though he did not say so in words. Similarly, the one who tries to get closer to another by various avenues announces to him and to others that he loves that person, even though he did not say so, and vice-versa.

Such is the case with Allah's testimony and His expounding and announcing it. Sometimes He does this by speech and sometimes by action. As for speech, it includes what He sent with messengers and revealed with books. As for His exposition and announcing by His actions, as Ibn Kaysan mentioned, Allah witnesses to it with His marvelous control and order of His creation. This leads to the conclusion that there is no god except He. Another person said in lines of poetry,

" In everything there is a sign of Him/
That points to Him being only One.

What points to testimony also possibly being in actions is the verse in the Qur'ān, "It is not for the idolaters to control maintenance of Allah's houses of worship when they bear witness to their own disbelief" [9:17]. That is, testimony against themselves is found in their actions. The point is that Allah testifies with His created signs that point to His existence, and the evidence is in their being His creation.

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[11] This is part of a *ḥadīth* in which a person asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the *shahādah* (testimony of faith) and he said, "Do you see the sun?" He said, "Yes." The Prophet then told him, "Either bear witness similar to that witnessing, or simply leave it." This *ḥadīth* was recorded by Al-Ḥakīm, vol. 4, p. 95, and others. In its chain is Muḥammad Ibn Sulaymān Al-Masmūlī, who is weak.

Concerning being obligated to and following what has been testified to – which is not a necessary component of a simple witnessing per se, but in this case it does point to it and includes it – Allah witnesses to His unity a type of testimony that necessitates that people are ruled by it and He decreed to, commanded and required His servants to abide by it. As Allah states in the Qur'ān, "Your Lord has decreed that you must not worship anyone but Him" [17:23]. He also says, "And Allah has declared: Do not worship two gods" [16:51]; and, "They are commanded naught else than to serve Allah" [98:5]; also, "Assign no other god with Allah" [17:39]; and again, "And never call upon any god besides Allah" [28:88]. In fact, all of the Qur'ān bears testimony to that.

That it is obligatory to obey and follow His testimony can be seen in the following arguments. When He testifies that there is no god but He, He is enunciating, clarifying, instructing, judging and decreeing that nothing besides Him is a god, and that anything taken as god other than Him is false. This means that nothing is deserving of worship other than He, in the same way that no other thing is worthy of being divine. Therefore, that necessitates the command to take only Him as God, and the prohibition against taking anything with Him as a god. This is what the addressee understands from that form of negation and confirmation.

In the same manner, if you saw someone asking another person for a religious verdict, or calling upon a specific person to be a witness, or referring to someone for medical advice and these people were not qualified for those jobs and the persons who were qualified were ignored, you would say, "That person is not a jurist; that person cannot be a witness; and that other person is not a doctor. But so-and-so is qualified as a jurist, and so-and-so is qualified as a witness, and so-and-so is qualified as a doctor." This is, in reality, a command from Him and a prohibition.

Similarly, the verses point to Him being the only One deserving of worship. When He enunciates that He is the only One worthy of worship, it follows that this enunciation is a command to the servants to fulfill the statement and worship Him in the manner that He deserves and to fulfill that command solely and sincerely for Him as is His right upon them.

Furthermore, the words "judgment" and "decree" are used in declarative sentences. In such sentences one says, "decree" and "judgment". Allah says, "Beware! It is their own lie that they assert, 'Allah has begotten offspring.' They are certainly liars. Has he chosen daughters in preference to sons? What is the matter with you? How you judge!" [37:151-154]. Allah declared their plain statement as a judgment. Allah also said, "Will we treat those who

submit to Allah like the sinful? What has come over you that you form such a judgment!" [68:35-36]. However, that judgment has nothing making it obligatory to be implemented; but the judgment and decree that there is no god but He includes such an obligation.

If (the *shahādah*) were simply meant to be a declaration, they would not be able to know the meaning of it or benefit from it, nor would the *shahādah* be a proof against them. But the *shahādah* does encompass a declaration for the servants and evidence and clarification of what he is witnessing to. Like the case of a human witness who has testimony but does not declare or divulge it, but instead conceals it, nobody would benefit from it and no proof would be based upon his witness.

If it cannot be benefited from except through declaring and clarifying it, then Allah has made a complete exposition and declaration by three means: hearing, seeing and reason.

As for hearing, it is through hearing His verses that are recited and are clear that we know of His perfect attributes, of His unity and of other matters in the clearest fashion. It is not the case, as the Jahmīyyah and those who agree with them of the Mu'tazilah claim, that one should deny some of His attributes, claiming that they may lead to confusion and loss, as this denies the clarity of Allah's Book, which Allah has described as clear, and of that of His Messenger. Allah says, "*Hā Mīm*. By the book that makes things clear" [43:1-2]. "*Alif Lām Rā*. These are the verses of the clear book" [12:1]. "*Alif Lām Rā*. These are the verses of the Book and a clear reading" [15:1]. "This is a clear declaration to all of mankind and guidance and admonition for the God-conscious" [3:138]. "Know that the obligation on Our Messenger is simply plain conveyance (of the Message)" [5:92]. "We have revealed to you the Reminder for you to explain to mankind what has been revealed for them. Perhaps they will reflect" [16:44].

Similarly, the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be on him) is filled with statements that explain or concur with what the Qur'ān states. When it comes to matters related to the foundations of our religion, Allah has never made it necessary for us to turn to the personal opinions, intuition or instincts of any human being.

That is why we find that those who differ from the Book and Sunnah are always in confused disagreement. In fact, Allah has stated, "This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and granted my pleasure to Islam as the religion for you" [5:3]. Therefore, it is not necessary to complete or complement the religion with anything that comes from outside the Book and the Sunnah.

That is the meaning that Sheikh Abū Ja'far Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, may Allah have mercy on Him, was alluding to in his coming statement, "We do not interpret His words according to our fancy, for no one can secure his faith unless he submits to God and His Prophet completely."

As for His created, witnessed signs, one can look at them and infer from them the same that can be inferred from His signs that are stated and passed on (that is, verses of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, peace be on him. Reason combines both of them and declares definitively the correctness of what the messengers brought. Therefore, the witness of hearing, sight, reason and natural endowment are all in agreement.

Due to His complete justice, mercy, goodness, witness, love for vindication and establishment of the proof and truth, He did not send any messenger without signs that pointed to his truthfulness concerning what he stated about His Lord. Allah says, "We truly sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance, that mankind may observe justice" [57:25]; and, "And We sent not before you other than men whom We inspired – ask the followers of the remembrance if you know not – with clear proofs and writings" [16:43-44]; "Say: Messengers came to you before me with clear signs and what you are now asking for" [3:183]. And Allah says, "And if they deny you, even so did they deny messengers who were before you who came with miracles and with the Psalms and with the Scripture giving light" [3:184].

Allah also says, "Allah it is Who revealed the Scripture with Truth and the Balance" [42:17]. Even the most indistinct sign of any messenger, that of Hūd, whose people said to him, "You have not brought us any clear proof" [11:53], was a very clear sign for anyone Allah allowed to ponder it. Allah alludes to it in these words, "I (Hūd) call Allah to witness, and do you also bear witness, that I am innocent of all that you ascribe as partners beside Him. So (try to) circumvent me, all of you, and give me no respite. Lo! I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Not an animal is there but He does grasp it by the forelock. Lo! my Lord is on the Straight Path" [11:54-56]. That is the greatest of signs: that a single individual could address a great nation with that speech without any fear, apprehension or anguish. In fact, he was fully confident and certain of what he was saying. First, he took Allah as a witness that he was innocent of their religion and what they were following. It was the type of testimony that he could be certain of and could rely upon. He informed his people that Allah was his friend and

supporter and that He would not allow them to gain control over him.

Then he testified to them in frank testimony that he had nothing to do with their religion and the gods that they aligned themselves with and who they would oppose others for and would sacrifice their blood and wealth on behalf of. Then he stressed that upon them by showing disdain for their idols, and he looked down upon them with contempt. If they all worked together against him to relieve themselves of him, that would not slow him down. Then he clearly explained to them his message. He made it clear to them that His Lord and their Lord, in Whose hand was everybody's forelock, was his helper and protector Who supported him and aided him, and that he was along the straight path, and that He would not leave anyone who put his trust in Him and believed in Him. And He would not let his enemies rejoice at his misfortune.

What sign or proof is better than those of the prophets and their proofs and evidence? They are testimonials from Allah for them and He made it clear as clear as could be for His servants.

One of the names of Allah is Al-Mu'min. And, according to one explanation of its meaning, it means that He is the One Who proves the veracity of the truthful by doing the things that bear testimony to their truthfulness. He shows mankind, for example, signs on the horizons and in their own selves that make it clear to them that the revelation that the messengers conveyed is true. Allah says, "We will show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest to them that it is the truth" [41:53], that is, that the Qur'ān is true. It is what is referred to in the verse previous to it, "Bethink you: if it is from Allah..." [41:52]. And then He says, "Does not your Lord suffice, since He is witness over all things?" [41:52]. Allah testifies for His Messenger by His statement that what He brought is the truth and by promising to show mankind created signs that also witness to that. Then Allah mentions what is even greater and more profound than all of that and that is His witness of everything.

Another of His names is Ash-Shahīd, which means the One from Whom nothing is hidden or escapes. He sees and observes everything and is knowledgeable of its details. This is a proof from His names and attributes. The first is a proof from His words and speech. And proof by His signs in the horizons and in the souls is an inference from His actions and creation.

If you ask how one can infer from His names and attributes, as using them as inference never occurred in terminology, the response to that is that Allah placed in human disposition (*fiṭrah*), when it is not defiled by denial or rejection, or by anthropomorphism, that

Allah is complete and perfect in His names and attributes. He is as He has been described by Himself or by His messengers. What is hidden of His perfection is greater (than what is known) and is greater than what is known from Him.

And from His holy perfection is His witnessing and observing everything, such that not an iota, hidden or apparent, in the heavens or the earth is hidden from Him. From this characteristic of His, how can human beings ascribe partners to him, worship others besides Him and take other gods? How can He, with His perfection, allow anyone to commit the greatest falsehood against Him and report something about Him contrary to what He has commanded and then, beyond that, even help that liar, support him, raise his position, respond to his call, destroy his enemy and show through him signs and evidence that other strong human beings would not be capable of, and, given all of that, that person is a liar and forger? It is well-known that His being a witness of everything, His ability, His wisdom, His honor and holy perfection would not allow that. Whoever would say that such is permissible is a person furthest away from actually knowing Him.

The Qur'ān is filled with this type of argument. It is the approach of those well-grounded in knowledge. They argue concerning Allah by His actions and what actions are fit for Him to do or not to do. Allah says in the Qur'ān, "And if he had invented false sayings concerning Us, We assuredly would have taken him by the right hand and then severed his life-artery. And not one of you could have held Us off from him" [69:44-47]. This will be discussed in more detail later, God willing.

His names and attributes are also used as evidence of His unity and the falsehood of polytheism. Note the verse, "He is Allah. There is no god but He, the Sovereign-Lord, the Holy One, the Fountain of Peace, the Preserver of Security, the Protecting Guardian, the Exalted in Power, the Dominant, the Great Supreme. Glorified be Allah above all that they associated with Him" [59:23]. This (kind of argument) can be found many times in the Qur'ān.

This approach, though, is followed by a very few; only the elect, well-grounded in knowledge, are guided to it. The majority of people use as proof the signs that can be witnessed, as they are easier to convey and more encompassing. And Allah exalts some of His creation over others.

The Qur'ān has combined some aspects that are not combined elsewhere. It is both the evidence and what is being proved, as well as the witness and what is being witnessed to. Allah says in the Qur'ān to anyone who is seeking evidence that His messenger is truthful, "Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you

this Book which is rehearsed to them? In this is surely a mercy and a reminder for the people who believe..." [29:51].

Now that it is established that *tawḥīd al-ilāhīyyah* is what the prophets preached and what the heavenly books taught, as has been pointed out, one should not heed the statement of those who divide *tawḥīd* into three types (as in the following manner). This first type of *tawḥīd*, they say, is the *tawḥīd* of the common people. The second type is the *tawḥīd* of the elect, which, they say, is the *tawḥīd* that is realized in mystical experience. The third is the *tawḥīd* of the elect of the elect. This *tawḥīd*, they believe, is affirmed by the Eternal Being Himself. However, one should not heed these statements, for the people who were most perfect in *tawḥīd* were the prophets (peace be on them all).

The messengers were even greater than they, especially those of resolute purpose, namely Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad (peace be on them all). Of these, two - the most beloved of Allah - Abraham and Muḥammad, were the most complete in *tawḥīd* for they fulfilled the demands of *tawḥīd* more than anyone else – demands regarding faith, knowledge, experience, calling men to it and striving for its cause. No *tawḥīd* can be more complete than the *tawḥīd* which the messengers stated, preached and struggled for. That is why Allah commanded His Prophet (peace be on him) to follow in their footsteps. After describing Abraham's argument with his people in support of *tawḥīd* and his denunciation of *shirk*, and after mentioning other prophets among his descendants, Allah says, "Those were the ones who received Allah's guidance; follow then their way" [6:90]. No one can be more complete in *tawḥīd* than those whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) was told to follow.

The Prophet (peace be on him) used to teach his companions that they should say in the morning, "We begin our day on the pattern (*fiṭrah*) of Islam. The statement of sincerity, the religion of our Prophet, Muḥammad, and the faith (millah) of our forefather, Abraham, who submitted himself sincerely to Allah and did not associate anyone with Him."[12] The *millah* of Abraham is *tawḥīd*. The religion of Muḥammad is every statement, action, and belief that He brought from Allah. The statement of sincerity is the testimony that there is no god but Allah. The *fiṭrah* of Islam is the natural disposition man has been given to love and worship only Allah, without ascribing any partner to Him, and submitting to Him with complete servitude, humility and reverence.

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[12]Aḥmad, 3:406, 407; Ad-Dārimī, 2:292. Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

This is the *tawḥīd* of the most elite or dear from among the chosen ones of Allah. Whoever turns away from it is the fool of all fools. Allah has Himself said, "Who turns away from the faith of Abraham but such as debase their souls with folly? Him We chose and rendered pure in this world, and he will be in the Hereafter in the ranks of the righteous. Behold! His Lord said to him, 'Submit to me, (and) he said, 'I submit to the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe'" [2:130-131].

The one with intelligence and sense is not in need of the arguments of the dialectitians and the theologians or their terms and methods. In fact, they may only lead him to doubts that will further lead him to confusion, bewilderment and misbelief. Truly, *tawḥīd* is beneficial when the heart is free of all of those (diseases), that is, the sound heart, concerning which no one will prosper unless he approaches Allah with such a heart.

The second and third types of *tawḥīd*, which have been called the *tawḥīd* of the elect and that of the elect of the elect, culminate in the passing away of the self (fanā) which most Ṣūfis strive for. It is a dangerous alley which leads to (the concept of) union (*ittihad*]. Read these lines which Sheikh Al-Islam Abū Isma'īl Al-Anṣārī Al-Harwī, may Allah have mercy on him, composed,[13]

> No one affirms the unity of the One
> for whoever affirms His unity denies it.
> Whoever describes Him, His description of Unity
> is void and unacceptable to the One.
> The real affirmation of His unity
> is what the One Himself does, and
> whoever tries to describe Him is a heretic.

Although the author of these lines did not mean to imply union (*ittihad*), he has used vague words which an proponent of union is likely to interpret on his lines and think that the author belongs to his way of thinking. Had he used the words which the Shari'ah uses and which are clear and non-misleading, it would have been more

[13]For a review and criticism of Al-Anṣāri's views expressed in these lines of poetry, see Ibn Qayyīm Al-Jawzīyyah (also know as Ibn Al-Qayyīm), *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, ed. by Muḥammad Ḥāmid Al-Fiqī (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'ah al-Muḥammadīyyah, 1375/1976), vol. 3, p. 518. Ibn Al-Qayyīm makes the point that in various verses of the Qur'ān, Allah has testified that His angels, His prophets, and their followers who have knowledge affirm and expound His unity. It is not, therefore, correct for anyone to say that no one has truly affirmed God's unity and that those who have ventured so have been guilty of heresy.

correct. Had we been required to believe in what these lines suggest, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have mentioned it, invited people to believe in it, and explained it at length. But there is no proof that he ever distinguished between a *tawḥīd* of the commoner, a *tawḥīd* of the elect and a *tawḥīd* of the elect of the elect. There is absolutely no allusion to it anywhere. In fact, there is nothing even close to it.

Here is the Book of Allah, the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him), the traditions of the best people of all ages after the age of the Prophet, and the works of the leading scholars. Is there any mention of *fana* in any of them? Has any one of them talked about these levels of *tawḥīd*? In fact, this concept developed later, when some people became excessive with respect to some parts of the religion, just as the Khawārij did earlier in Islam or the Christians did in their religion. Allah has condemned all excesses in religion and has strictly prohibited them. Allah states, "People of the Book! Commit not excesses in your religion; nor say aught of Allah except the truth" [4:171]. And also, "Say: People of the Book! Exceed not in your religion the bounds (of what is proper), trespassing beyond truth, nor follow the vain desires of people who went wrong in times gone by, who mislead many and strayed themselves from the even way" [5:77].

The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Do not commit excess and make things difficult for yourselves, for Allah will then make things difficult for you. From among those who came before you were people who went to excesses, and Allah made things difficult for them. It is their remnants that you see in the cloisters and monasteries. 'They invented monasticism. We did not prescribe it for them' [57:27]."[14] Abū Dāwūd recorded this *ḥadīth*.

(2) There is nothing like Him.

The Ahl as-Sunnah are agreed that nothing is like Allah, not in His essence, attributes or acts. However, the word *tashbīh* ('to liken') as people have come to use it, is rather vague. It has its proper sense, which is what the Qur'ān denies (concerning Allah) and which agrees with reason. It means that the attributes characteristic of Allah cannot be ascribed to created beings, for nothing is like Allah in any of His attributes, "Nothing is like Him"

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[14] Abū Dāwūd, Al-Adab, 4904; Abū Ya'la, *Musnad*, ed. by Ḥussayn Salām Asad (Damascus: Dār al-Mamūn li at-Turāth, 1406/1986), *ḥadīth* no. 3694. Al-Albānī has stated that this *ḥadīth* is weak.

[42:11]. It refutes those who set up a comparison or a resemblance of anything with God. On the other hand, when it says, "And He is All-Hearing and All-Seeing" [42:11], it censures those who would strip Allah of His attributes and negate them. One who likens the attributes of Allah with those of the created beings is an anthropomorphist (*mushābbih*), and should be censured and condemned. Similarly, one who conceives the attributes of the created beings on the pattern of Allah's attributes is guilty of the blasphemy which the Christians commit.

Some people use the word *tashbīḥ* in a different sense and, on that account, they refrain from affirming the attributes of Allah. They say that Allah cannot be said to have power, knowledge or life, because these are attributable to humans. It follows from this view that we cannot call Allah Living, Knowing or Powerful, because these names are also used to describe human beings. The same applies to Allah's speech, hearing, seeing and will. However, these people agree with the Ahl as-Sunnah that Allah exists, that He is Knowing, Powerful and Living, and that created beings can also be said to be existing, knowing and powerful. They also agree that this is not the kind of *tashbīh* that is to be negated. This is also upheld by the Qur'ān and Sunnah, as well as by clear reasoning. No reasonable person would dispute it.

Allah has called Himself by certain names and He also called some of His servants by the same names. He has also qualified Himself with certain attributes and, at the same time qualified different beings that He created with the same attributes. But neither one named is the same as the other named, nor is one attribute the same as the other attribute. He has called Himself Living, Knowing, Powerful, Compassionate, Merciful, Mighty, Wise, Hearing, Seeing, King, Guardian (Al-Mu'min), Irresistible (Al-Jabbār), Justly Proud (Al-Mustakbīr), and He has called many of His servants by these same names. For example, He has said, "He brings out the living from the dead" [6:95; 30:19]; "They gave him the good news that he would have a knowledgeable son" [51:28]; "(The Prophet) is compassionate and merciful to the Believers" [9:128]; "We made (man) a hearing and seeing being" [76:2]; "The wife of the mighty officer said..." [12:51]; "There was a king after him" [18:79]; "One who is a Believer (*mū'min*)" [32:18]; and, "Allah seals the heart of every arrogant (*mustakbīr*) and obstinate transgressor (*jabbār*)" [40:35]. But we know that the One Living Being is not like the other living being, the One Knowing Being is not like the other knowing being, and the Mighty One is not like the other mighty, and so on with respect to the other names.

And Allah has also said, "They would not encompass aught of His knowledge" [2:255]; "He has sent it from His own knowledge" [4:166]; "No woman conceives or gives birth without His knowledge" [35:11]; "Allah is the One Who gives sustenance, Lord of unbreakable power" [51:58]; and, "Did they not see that Allah created them and that He is more powerful than they" [41:15].

Jābir narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) used to teach the Companions (the supplication of) istikharah in the same way that he would teach them a chapter of the Qur'ān. He said, "When you face a situation or problem, offer two rak'at of prayer other than the obligatory ones and say, 'O Allah, I appeal to your knowledge to let me know what is good for me, and I appeal to your power to enable me to do it, and I pray for one of Your great blessings. For You can do anything but I cannot. You know everything and I do not. O Allah, You are aware of all hidden things. If You know that this thing is good for me, for my religion and my life in this world and the next (or here and hereafter), then grant it to me, make it easy for me and bless it. If you know that this deed is bad for me in my religion and my life in this world and the next (or here and hereafter), then turn it from me and provide for me good, wherever it is." After this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, the person should state whatever he wants.[15] This *ḥadīth* was recorded by Al-Bukhārī.

An-Nasā'ī and others recorded a *ḥadīth* narrated by Ammār Ibn Yāsir that the Prophet (peace be on him) used to invoke Allah in these words, "O Allah, I appeal to Your knowledge of things unseen and to Your power over creation. Let me live as long as living is good for me. Let me die when death is good for me. O Allah, help me fear you in public and in secret. Help me tell the truth in anger and in joy. Let me follow the middle course in prosperity as well as in adversity. Grant me the blessing that has no end and the happiness that lasts forever. Let me submit to Your decree without a murmur, and let me have a good life after death. O Allah, grant me the joy of seeing Your face and the love for meeting You, and save me from the harm it might cause and the trouble it might lead to. O Allah, adorn us with faith and help us guide people to the right path."[16]

(It is clear from the above Qur'ānic verses and *ḥadīth*) that Allah and His Prophet (peace be on him) have ascribed various attributes

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[15]Al-Bukhārī, 1162, 6382, 7390; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1538; At-Tirmidhī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 480; An-Nasā'ī, *An-Nikāḥ*, 6:80-81; Ibn Mājah, 1383; Aḥmad, 3:344.

[16]An-Nasā'ī, *As-Sahw*, 3:54-55; Aḥmad, 4:264. Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

to Allah, such as knowledge, power and might. Allah, for example, says, "He gave power to man after he was weak" [30:54], and, "...he possesses knowledge since We have given it to him" [12:68]. Everyone knows that one knowledge is not like the other knowledge, and one power is not like the other power. There are many more verses and *aḥādīth* of this nature that underscore the truth for one who would reflect.

Whoever negates attributes like pleasure (*rida*), anger (*ghadab*), love (*ḥubb*), and hate (*baghd*) which Allah has affirmed of Himself, because in their view it means comparing Allah with His creatures (*tashbih*) and ascribing to Him a body (*tajsim*), may be told that you yourselves do affirm attributes like Allah's will, speech, hearing and seeing, and simply qualify them by saying, "They are not like the attributes of the creatures. So why should you not make the same qualification with regard to these attributes and affirm them of Allah, as He and His Prophet have done? There is no difference between these two kinds of attributes."

If he says, "I do not affirm any of the attributes of Allah," say to him, "You affirm that He has the Most Beautiful Names, such as Living, Knowing and Powerful. But human beings are also called by these names, although to avoid misunderstanding you add that divine names are not like human names. The question is why don't you say the same thing about Allah's attributes? Affirm them of Allah and add that they are not like human attributes."

If he says, "I do not affirm that He has the Most Beautiful Names, but I say that they are simply allegorical or metaphorical," that is the view of the extremists among the esoterics (*bāṭinīyyah*) and the philosophers. Say to him, "You must believe that He is there, that He is real, existing of Himself, and that there are also bodies there existing in themselves, but Allah is not like them. (Don't you then contradict yourself?)"

If he says, "I do not affirm anything. In fact, I deny the existence of the Necessary Being." Then say to him, "It is well known by sound reasoning that whatever exists either exists necessarily by itself or does not exist by itself. It is either eternal and without a beginning, or contingent, coming into existence after a time when it was not there. It is either created and produced by a creator or uncreated, needing no creator. It is either dependent on something else or it is self-sufficient. Obviously, what is not necessary by itself needs, in order to exist, something that is necessary by itself. A contingent being needs an eternal being; a created being needs a creator; a dependent being needs a being that is self-sufficient. Since one of the contraries exists, it follows that

there must be a Being there, existing necessarily by Itself, Eternal and Beginningless, Creator, Self-Sufficient and Independent of all. It also follows that all other beings must be just the opposite.

We certainly know by our senses and self-evident reasoning that there are contingent things that have come into existence after they were non-existent. We also know that a contingent being cannot exist by itself, nor can it exist eternally without a beginning, nor can it create other things by itself and be self-sufficient and independent. This means that there must be, of necessity, two existences: one necessary and the other possible; one eternal and the other contingent; one self-sufficient and the other dependent; one Creator and the other created; even though both exist and exist in themselves.

We also know that one is not like the other in its essence, because if they were alike in everything, in necessity, possibility or impossibility, one would have to be necessary and eternal, existing by itself, and the other would have to be possible and existing by itself; one would have to be the Creator and the other would have to be created; one would have to be self-sufficient and the other dependent. Had they been alike, each would have been necessarily eternal as well as non-eternal, existing by itself as well as not existing by itself, creator as well as created, self-sufficient as well as dependent. That would mean the co-existence of contraries, which is ruled out. Thus reason upholds what the Shari‘ah says: the two cannot be alike.

It is clear from the above arguments that the Creator and the created are similar in some respects and differ in others. Hence, one who denies what is common between them is a negator (of divine attributes) and is surely mistaken. On the other hand, one who makes them alike anthropomorphizes Allah and is equally mistaken. And Allah knows best. That is because, even though they are called by the same names, they are not identical: Allah has His own existence, knowledge, power and all other attributes in which man cannot participate. Similarly, man has his existence, knowledge and power, and Allah is too exalted to participate in what is particular to man. That which is common between them - existence, knowledge, power, and so on - is nothing more than a general concept, simply a mental concept that does not really exist out there in reality. What exists out there is specific to each, without the one participating in the other.

Many thinkers are confused on this point. Some think that, since the Creator and created share in what these things connote, the existence of God should be like the existence of men. Others, on the contrary, think that the term existence (wujud) has no common

connotation, but this contradicts reason. The fact is that these terms are general and may be divided into categories. As was said, for example, existence may be divided into necessary or possible, eternal or contingent. The term existence that is divided is common between the two. This is in contrast to such common words as mushtarī, which means a buyer as well as the planet Jupiter. They have no common divisible connotation; we can only say that mushtarī sometimes designates one thing and sometimes the other. The reader may seek a detailed discussion of this point in the relevant works.

The root cause of the error is the common belief that what is designated by these general terms is something universal and that it exists in one particular individual or another; but this is not the case, for what exists out there (as a rational concept) does not exist as an absolute universal, but only as a determinate particular. When these terms are used in reference to Allah, they connote something specific to Him; and when they are used in reference to human beings, they connote something specific to them. Hence, nothing shares with Allah in His existence or life. In fact, nothing or no one shares in the existence of anything or anyone else. If that is true, how can anything partake in the existence of the Creator? Don't you see that when you say, "this" or "that", you point to one and the same thing but from two different angles?

From this and similar arguments it should be clear that the anthropomorphists refer to *tashbīh* and add to it what is not true. They certainly do go astray, therefore. On the other hand, the negators of Allah's attributes begin with negating similarity in one aspect and then extend it to other aspects which are not true. They also go astray, then. It is also clear that the Qur'ān tells the pure truth, which is also upheld by unclouded reason and which is free from every error.

The negators (of Allah's attributes) do well in putting Allah beyond all likeness to His creatures, but they do wrong when they at the same time negate ideas which are true of Allah. The anthropomorphists, on the other hand, do well in their endeavor to affirm Allah's attributes, but they do wrong when they conceive of them as on the pattern of human attributes.

One should realize that one cannot teach another the meaning of a word unless that person knows the object it refers to, knows something which is similar to it, or has some features in common with it; without that he cannot understand the meaning of the word. When you teach the meaning of a sentence, you begin by telling the meaning of the individual words, and when you teach a child how to talk, you say a word and point to the object it refers to, if it is

something physical. You say, for example, milk, bread, mother, father, sky, earth, sun, moon, water, and so on, and point along with that to the objects you name; otherwise you cannot teach the meaning of any word or convey any idea. No human being can dispense with auditory learning.[17] Adam, the father of mankind, first learned things through hearing, when Allah "taught him all the names,"[18] spoke to him and revealed to him all that he could not learn simply by reasoning.

Hence, a word comes to mean something because it refers to what the speaker wants and intends in his heart to convey. Since the intention is a matter in one's heart, the word cannot convey the meaning just by itself. One cannot learn an idea without a word, but one can also not learn it unless one knows what is intended by the speaker. When one knows that, and then hears the word a second time, one understands the meaning conveyed by the word even if the speaker does not point it out. If the object referred to, though, is something experienced internally, such as hunger, satiation, thirst, quenching of thirst, sorrow or joy, no one can understand it unless he experiences himself what the word stands for. Only after he has experienced it will he understand the word when he hears it. Then we may sometimes refer in such cases to his own feeling of hunger or thirst. When, for example, he is hungry, we can say, "You are hungry." He will then hear the words and understand what we are referring to by pointing it out or through circumstantial evidence. For example, he will understand when he sees his mother looking at him when he is hungry and infers from seeing her eyes or any other of her gestures that she is referring to his hunger, or when he hears some people referring through those means to the hunger of any other person.

If that is comprehended, then when someone wants to teach anything, there are the following possibilities. Either his listener will comprehend him with his senses, observation or mind, or he will not comprehend him. In the first two cases, it is only necessary that he know the language, knowing the meaning of every word individually and in a sentence. If he hears, for example, the verse, "Have We not made for him a pair of eyes, and a tongue and a pair of lips" [90:9], or the verse, "It is Allah Who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when you knew nothing, and (He) gave you hearing and sight, intelligence and affections, that you may give thanks (to Allah)" [16:78], he will understand them in the light

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[17] or, in the case of the deaf, an adequate substitute (ed.)

[18] See Qur'ānic verse 2:31.

of his sense experience. But if the meaning that one is trying to pass on to him is not one that he can comprehend through what he senses or witnesses, the only way to make him understand it is to explain it through analogy, simile and allusion based upon the similarity or resemblance the idea may have to objects he knows. The more perfect the simile, the better it will describe the object and the more conducive for understanding it will be.

When the Messenger (peace be on him) explained to us matters that were not known before him, and there was no word that particularly described it, he would use a term whose connotation was closest to the concept he wanted to convey and he would call it by that term. Thus, there was something common between the concept and the term. This is true of words like *ṣalāh* (prayer), *zakāh* (poor-due), *ṣawm* (fasting), *īmān* (faith) and *kufr* (disbelief). Similarly, when he wanted to inform them about matters related to faith in Allah and the Last Day, they were actually unfamiliar with such concepts before that time and did not have any terms that referred to those concepts exactly, he used the words of their language that were most suitable and that had some common connotation between the unknown things that he was trying to explain and the things that they were familiar with. He also used to make some gestures or signs that helped people understand exactly what he wanted to say, as one does when teaching a child. Rabi'ah Ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān said, "Common people are taught by scholars in the same way children are taught by their parents."

But when the Messenger spoke about unseen things, it was quite possible that people had been aware of similar things in their observation or thought. For example, when he said that the people of 'Ad were destroyed by a strong wind, there was nothing strange in this to them. For the people of 'Ad were human beings like themselves and the wind, even though it was extremely violent, was like the winds they were aware of. Similarly, there was nothing strange to them in the drowning of Pharaoh in the sea or the narratives of the other people of the past. And this is why their narratives have a lesson for us, as Allah has said, "There is a lesson for intelligent people in their stories" [12:111].

The Messenger (peace be on him) sometimes told of things the likes of which, in every respect, people had never seen; however, the elements that they consisted of may have resembled elements that they were aware of. For example, when he spoke about things of the Unseen, concerning Allah or the Hereafter, they must have been aware of certain ideas common between the elements of the things the Prophet spoke of and the elements of things in this life that they knew through their senses and reason. But if they had not

previously observed that visible object, and he wanted them to perceive it and observe it thoroughly so they could know the thing common between it and the object unseen, he would show them that object or point to it or describe it in words so as to give a picture of it to his audience. They then understood that the way to know things that are unseen is through things that are visible.

There are then three steps that one must realize. First, perception of visible objects; second, comprehension of general ideas; and, third, awareness of words that signify those sensible and rational ideas. These three steps are involved in every speech act. When we want to talk about unseen things, we have to point out the ideas that are common between those things and the objects that we observe, as well as underline their resemblance. We have to state that they resemble visible objects and point out those objects. If they are like them, we do not have to mention how they differ from those objects, as was the case with the stories of the people of the past. But if they are not that similar, we have to point out the difference. We can say that one is not exactly like the other, or something similar to that. If we deny likeness, that itself will suffice to underline the difference. However, the denial of likeness does not mean negation of the common element which is connoted by the word common to them. This is how we can understand the unseen things. Were there nothing in common, no one could talk about any of the unseen things.

(3) Nothing is impossible for Him.

This is due to His complete Power. Allah says, "Truly Allah can do anything" [2:20]; "Allah has power over all things" [18:45]; "Allah is never frustrated by anything whatsoever in the heavens and the earth, for He is All-Knowing and All-Powerful" [35:44]; and, "His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in preserving them, and He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory)" [2:255]. In the last verse, the words are lā ya'udūhū, which means nothing causes Him any trouble or fatigue and nothing is beyond His means. This negation is because the opposite attribute of perfection has been established for Allah. In the Qur'ān and Sunnah, whenever anything is negated of Allah it is because Allah is qualified with the opposite attribute of perfection. For example, Allah's statement, "Your Lord does not treat anyone with injustice" [18:49], is true because He is completely just. Similarly, when He says, "Not the least little atom in the heavens and on earth is hidden from Him" [34:3], this is true because of His perfect knowledge. Or when he says, "No fatigue overtook Us" [50:38], this is the case

because of His complete power. And "No slumber can seize Him nor sleep" [2:255] is true because of His complete, living, unlimited energy and complete power to control and sustain the world. The verse, "No vision can grasp Him" [6:103], similarly asserts His sublime majesty and glory. If this were not true there would have been no benefit in simply negating something. Pure negation is not a complement. Note the lines of the poet:

> The small tribe does not violate any pact
> Nor does it wrong anyone even the slightest amount.

When the denial of injustice and wrongdoing in that passage is looked at in its complete context and his use of the words, "small tribe", it becomes clear that he is referring to their weakness and inability (to harm others) and not their complete power. Another said:

> Although my tribe has many,
> They do no evil, not even minute.

When he denies their evil in a way that is blaming them, it becomes clear that he is referring to their weaknesses and inabilities.

That is why the Qur'ān states the positive attributes of Allah in detail and refers to the negative attributes in brief or in general. The blameworthy theologians, on the other hand, followed the opposite method. They discussed the negative attributes at length and mentioned the positive attributes only briefly. They said, for example, "Allah is neither a body nor a figure, neither matter or form, nor has He flesh, blood, or personality; He is neither a substance nor an accident; He has no smell, no color and no taste. He is neither hot nor cold, neither wet nor dry. He has no length, breadth or depth; He neither assembles nor disintegrates; He neither moves nor is at rest; He is indivisible, having no parts, organs or members; He has no dimension, right, left, front, behind, above or below; No space surrounds Him and no time limits Him; He neither goes near a thing nor away from it, nor does He enter anything; no attributes are to be ascribed to Him that also pertain to created objects and suggest their contingency; He cannot be said to have an end, a side or movement; He is not a finite being; He neither begets nor is He begotten; He is above all determination and beyond all limitation," and so on until the end of the statement that Abū Al-Ḥassan Al-Ash'arī recorded in describing the creed of the Mu'tazilah.

This passage contains things that are right and things that are wrong, and that is clear to anyone who is familiar with the Book and the Sunnah. The presentation of pure negatives only, without any laudatory statements, is indecorous and improper. If you were to say to a ruler, "You are not a garbage collector, or a barber, or a weaver," he would certainly censure you even though there is nothing false in what you said. But you would praise him if you made the negations general and said, for example, "You are not like anyone under your charge; you are superior, more honorable and more esteemed than they." If you are general in a negative statement, you are being more courteous and mannerly.

The way of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah is to describe Allah in words which Allah has chosen to describe Himself or that His prophet used for Him. Those who negate the attributes of Allah neglect the words that Allah and His Prophet have used concerning His names and attributes and they do not ponder the meanings of such terms. They think that the concepts and the terms which they have invented present the faith more faithfully and should be accepted. The Ahl as-Sunnah, on the other hand, believe that the words of Allah and His Prophet present the true faith and must be adhered to. They either ignore what those others say, or judge their terms at length in light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. But they never judge the Qur'ān and Sunnah in the light of what they say.

In short, the creed of such people consists mostly of negatives, "He is not this, He is not that..." They rarely affirm anything of Allah, except that He is Knowing, Powerful and Living. Most of the negatives that they state are, in fact, not even derived from the Book and the Sunnah, nor are they the result of rational arguments which people who affirm Allah's attributes have developed. Allah has said, "There is nothing like unto Him; and He is All-Hearing and All-Seeing" [42:11]. That verse states an affirmation that contains a negative. It is understood to mean that none other than He is qualified with the attributes of perfection. He is qualified with the attributes which He has mentioned of Himself or that His Prophet (peace be on him) has mentioned of Him. There is nothing similar to Him with respect to His attributes, names or actions that He has mentioned. He also has attributes that none of His creatures know, as His truthful Messenger (peace be on him) said in the supplication for troubled times, "O Allah, I beseech You by all Your names that You have given Yourself, or revealed in Your Book, or taught any of Your creatures, or kept in the Unseen with Yourself, make this Glorious Qur'ān the joy of my heart, the light of my breast, dispel

through it my grief and remove my anxiety and worry."[19] We will return later to a detailed discussion of their wrong view of Allah's attributes, if Allah so wills.

The statement of the author (may Allah have mercy on him), "Nothing is impossible for Him," is not of the type of negative that is disapproved of, because Allah Himself has said, "Allah is never frustrated by anything whatsoever in the heavens and the earth, for He is All-Knowing and All-Powerful" [35:44]. Allah points out, at the end of the verse, what demonstrates why His will can never be frustrated, and that is because He has complete knowledge and power. One is frustrated (or incapacitated) either because he lacks the power or the knowledge to do something. As for Allah, even the minute atoms are in His knowledge and the largest things are within His power. It is evident to rational thought and man's instincts that He has complete and perfect knowledge and power. Therefore, lack of ability has been denied because it is contrary to being powerful. The one who is incapable is not able to be god. May Allah be greatly exalted above that.

(4) There is no god other than He.

As stated earlier, this is the *tawḥīd* to which all prophets called their peoples. To state *tawḥīd* in this manner, that is, to negate (divinity of anyone else) and to affirm (it of only Allah), is to clearly limit divinity to Him. Only affirmation by itself is open to different interpretations. That is why, Allah knows best, when Allah stated, "Your God is one God" He said after it, "There is no god besides Him, the Beneficent, the Merciful" [2:163]. Otherwise, one may get the superficial thought that we have one god and maybe others have other gods, but this possibility is removed by His statement, "There is no god but He."

The author of *Al-Muntakhab* objects to the grammarians' hypothesis concerning the statement, "There is no god but Allah." They say that it means that there is no god in existence except Allah. He says that this denies the existence of any god. But, he says, for pure *tawḥīd*, it is much stronger to deny the essence of another being and not its existence. Therefore, the words must be taken literally and their hypothesis is to be rejected.[20]

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[19] Aḥmad, 1:391, 452; Ibn Ḥibban, 2372; Al-Ḥakīm, 1:509. Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[20] 'Abdul-'Azīz Ibn Bāz has commented on this passage, stating that to deny the existence of other gods – beings or objects that people worship – is incorrect, as the Qur'ān affirms it in many places. Hence, the statement, "There is no god but Allah"

Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn Abū Al-Fadhl Al-Mursī responded to this objection in *Ray az-Zumān* by saying that this opinion is from one who must not know Arabic. The word *ilah* is in the place of the subject, according to Sibawayh, or it is the noun for the word *lā*,[21] according to others. In either case, there must be a predicate for the subject. Therefore, what he said is incorrect.

As for his statement that if the hypothesis or assumption is not made, it would then mean a denial of the essence, this is not a sound statement. Denying the essence is the same thing as denying the existence. One cannot imagine an essence without an existence. So there is no difference between "no essence" and "no existence". This is the opinion of the Ahl as-Sunnah. On the other hand, the Mu'tazilah affirm an essence without an existence. The words, "except Allah" are in the nominative and they are not the predicate of *lā* nor of the nominative. And he gives evidence for that.

The purpose here is not to enter into a grammatical discussion. It is meant to refute the misconception of the grammarians and to show that the source for their mistake is the Mu'tazilah. Their statement, "in existence", is not constraining because non-existence is nothing. Allah says, "Even as I created you before, when you were nothing" [19:9]. Furthermore, one cannot say that the statement, "There is no other god," is the same as "There is no god except Allah," as the predicate in the former case is one. So I have now stated that misconception and its reply.

(5) He is Eternal, without a beginning, Everlasting, without an end.

Allah has said, "He is the First and the Last" [57:3]. And the Prophet (peace be on him) stated, "O Allah, You are the First, there is nothing before You. You are the Last, there is nothing after You."[22]

As for the author's words, "He is Eternal without a beginning, Everlasting without an end," they explain the meaning of the divine names, the First and the Last.

The knowledge affirming these two attributes is ingrained in human nature, for existing beings must have a beginning in One

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must mean "There is no true god deserving of worship except of Allah."

[21]It was the basic subject of the sentence before the word *lā* was introduced.

[22]Part of a *ḥadīth* recorded by Muslim, Adh-Dhikr, 2713. Also see Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 5051; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3397; Ibn Mājah, *Ad-Du'ā'*, 3873; Aḥmad, 2:381, 404.

Who necessarily exists by Himself in order to avoid an infinite regress. We witness that animals, plants and minerals on the earth, and clouds, rain, wind and other things in the atmosphere come into existence at one time or another. We also know that these things are not impossible, since the impossible cannot exist; nor do they exist necessarily by themselves, because a necessary being existing by itself can never be non-existent. These things were non-existent and then they came to exist. Hence, they are neither necessary or impossible. And what may both exist and not exist cannot exist by itself. As Allah has said, "Were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators?" [52:35]. That is, were they brought into existence by nothing, or did they bring themselves into existence. We know that a contingent being does not bring itself into existence. The possible thing that does not own its existence or non-existence cannot come to exist by itself. It can come into existence only when the cause of its existence is there. Everything that may exist rather than not exist, or may not exist rather than exist, cannot exist or not exist by itself.

If you consider the rational arguments which the scholastic theologians (*mutakallimūn*) and philosophers have advanced, those that are sound simply reiterate the rational arguments which the Qur'ān has stated in very concise and clear words. In fact, the Qur'ān has better and more solid arguments than theirs. Allah has rightly said, "And they bring you no similitude but We reveal to you the Truth and the best explanation (thereof)" [25:33].

We do not say that abstruse premises and arguments are useless. Abstruseness and clarity are relative terms. Something may be abstruse to one but clear to another. In fact, the same person may find something difficult to understand at one time and find the same thing easy to understand at another time. But some people readily grant abstruse premises and dispute clear ones. Again, some feel more pleasure in going through a long process and arguments and then discovering the truth than in getting to it in no time. The belief that the world has been created and the Creator exists by Himself is a part of the natural endowment and instincts of man, even though some people may doubt it and take recourse to rational arguments.

Theologians have mentioned Al-Qadīm as a name of Allah. However, it is not one of the beautiful names. For *qadīm* in the Arabic language in which the Qur'ān was revealed means 'one which is anterior to something else'. That which is old is called *qadim* and what is new is called *ḥadīth*. Qadim has always been used for something that precedes something else, but never in the sense of one preceded by nothing. The Qur'ān states, "Until it (the

moon) returns like the old lower part of a date tree stalk (*al-'urjūn al-qadīm*)" [36:39]. *Al-'urjūn al-qadīm* is what remains until another *'urjūn* comes into being. When the new *'urjūn* appears, the first is called *qadīm*. Another verse states, "When they could not get it, they said, 'This is an old (*qadīm*) falsehood " [46:11]. That is, it is past in time. A third verse reads, "Do you see whom you have been worshiping, you and your fathers before you (*al-aqdamūn*)" [26:75-76]. *Al-aqdam* is the comparative form of *qadīm* and means earlier. For example, one says, "The earlier opinion (*al-qawl al-qadīm*) or the later opinion (*al-qawl al-jadīd*) of Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī." Allah also says, "He will go before (*yaqdimu*) his people on the Day of Judgment and lead them into the Fire" [11:98]. *Q-d-m* is used as both a transitive and an intransitive verb. It is said, "I took both the old and the new (*akhadhtu ma qaduma wa ma hadutha*)." It is also said, "This came before that (*hadhā qadama hadhā*" It is on this basis that the foot is called *qadam*, since it precedes the other parts of the body.

As a name of Allah, Al-Qadīm is well-known among most of the theologians. Many of the Elders and later scholars, including Ibn Ḥazm, objected to it. To be sure, *qadim* implies precedence, and one who precedes everything deserves to be called al-*qadīm*. But Allah's names must mean something praiseworthy and *qadim* does not necessarily mean one who precedes everything, so it cannot be included among His beautiful names. This is why in the revelation one finds the word Al-Awwal ("the First") as it is better than Al-Qadīm as it suggests that whatever comes after Allah turns to Him (*a'il ilayhī*), and is under His control. This sense is not conveyed by al-*qadīm*. Allah has the most beautiful names and not simply names that are beautiful.

(6) He does not perish (*yafna*) or pass away (*yabid*).

This is to affirm that Allah is everlasting. He has said, "All that is on earth will perish, but the countenance of your Lord will abide, full of Majesty, Bounty and Honor" [55:27]. *Fana* (perish) and *bayd* (pass away) are almost synonymous. The Author has put them together for emphasis. And this statement also affirms and emphasizes the statement, "Everlasting without an end" (discussed earlier).

(7) Nothing comes into being except what He wills.

This is a refutation of the Mu'tazilah and Qadarīyyah. They believe that Allah wills every person to have faith, but the infidels will not have faith. This belief is wrong since it clearly goes against the Qur'ān, Sunnah and sound reason. It revolves around the well-known question of *qadr* (predestination) that we will discuss in detail later, if Allah wills.

(The group referred to) are called the Qadarīyyah because they deny *qadr* (predestination). Similarly, the Jabarīyyah ('the determinists) are also called Qadarīyyah since they build their doctrine on the concept of *qadr*. However, the term is usually used for the former group.

The Ahl as-Sunnah believe that Allah does will evil and sin, but only in the sense that He decrees it, not that He approves of it or enjoins it. Indeed, He hates, abhors and prohibits it. This is the view of all of the Elders. They believed that what Allah wills happens and what He does not will does not happen. For this reason, all of the jurists are agreed that if a man takes an oath by saying, "By Allah I will do such-and-such if Allah wills," he does not then break his oath if he does not perform that deed, regardless of whether that action was an obligatory or recommended action. But if he said, "If Allah loves it," then he would be breaking his oath by not performing if it were an obligatory or recommended act.

The scholars of the Ahl as-Sunnah say that the will (*irādah*) of Allah, as it has been used in the Qur'ān, is of two types. One is deterministic, existential and creative (*qadrīyyah*, *kawnīyyah, khalqīyyah*) and the other is religious, prescriptive and legislative (*dīnīyyah*, *amrīyyah, shar'īyyah*). Legislative will implies approval and love by Allah (for the act). Existential will, on the other hand, (does not imply that) as it applies to every event that occurs.

Examples of existential will are, "Him whom Allah wills to guide, He opens his heart to Islam, and those whom He wills to leave astray He makes their heart constricted and closed as if they had to climb up to the skies" [6:125]; "Of no profit will be my (i.e. Noah's) counsel to you, much as I desire to give you good counsel, if Allah wills to let you stray" [11:34]; "But Allah does what He wills" [2:253].

Examples of the religious, prescriptive or legislative will are, "Allah wishes (*yurīdu*) ever facility for you; He does not want (*yurīdu*) to put you to difficulties"[2:185]; "Allah wishes (*yurīdu*) to make clear to you and to show you the ways of those who went before; and He wishes to turn to you (in mercy). And Allah is All-

Knowing and All-Wise" [4:26]; "Allah wishes to turn to you (in mercy), but the wish of those who follow their lust is that you should turn away from Him. Allah wishes to lighten your (burden); for man has been created weak" [4:27-28]; "Allah does not want to put you in difficulty, but (He wants) to purify you and to complete His favor for you" [5:7); "And Allah only wants to remove all abomination from you, members of the family (of the Prophet), and to make you pure and spotless" [33:33].

It is this will which people mean when they say about someone who has performed an evil deed, "He has done something that Allah did not desire," that is, Allah does not love, approve of or command. As for the existential will, it is what Muslims mean when they say, "What Allah wills happens and what He does not will does not happen."

The difference between the two wills is clear. One is concerned with something that Allah does Himself; the other is concerned with something that He wants someone else to do. The first is the Willer's Own act, the second is that of another. This is clear to everyone. Command is concerned with the second, not the first. When Allah commands man to do something, He sometimes likes to help him carry it out, but sometimes He does not, even though He wants him to do it.

If we understand this point properly, the controversy over whether or not Allah's command (*amr*) implies that His will (*irādah*) fades. Allah has sent down a Shari'ah through His prophets, which secures happiness and saves mankind from misery. But it is only a part of mankind whose acts He wills to create; and when He wills, He creates their acts and makes them their doers. There are others whose acts He does not will to create. It is clear that His creation of their acts, or the acts of other creatures, is something different from His enjoining upon them the laws that will secure their well-being and save them from misery.

When, for example, He commands Pharaoh, Abū Lahab, or anyone else to believe in Him, He explains to them what course will be beneficial and what course will be harmful to them. But this does not mean that He will also help them carry out His commands. On the contrary, when He creates any act of theirs or helps them to effect it, it may involve something harmful to them. To be sure, all that He creates has a purpose. But it is not necessary that what He has commanded man to do and what is good for them when they carry it out should also be good for Allah when He Himself does it or makes them do it. The two aspects, the creative and the prescriptive, are not one.

It happens that sometimes we ask a person to do or not to do something and our intention is nothing but to do him good, which we even explain to him; nevertheless we do not want to help him do it. It is not necessary that if it is good for me to advise someone to do something for his own good it would also be good for me to help him do it. It may even be in my best interest to oppose the act. The two aspects are quite different: to advise someone sincerely to do something is one thing, and to do it oneself is another. Therefore, if it is possible to distinguish between these two aspects in the human context, it is much more possible and correct to make that distinction in the divine context.

The Qadarīyyah use the example of one person commanding another to do something. According to them, the commander must do the things that will lead the commanded to do the act. For example, he should greet him with a smiling face, offer him a chair and so on. But they fail to realize that there are two possibilities here. In one case, the benefit of the work may go to the one who commanded, such as when a king commands his army to wage a war which consolidates his power, when a master asks his servant to look after his property, or when one partner asks the other partner to do what benefits both, and so on. In the second case, the commander realizes that in helping the commanded there is some benefit for himself also. An example of this nature is the Islamic concept of "commanding good" or helping one's brother in righteous and pious deeds. In that case, the person knows that Allah will reward him for helping another obey Allah, as Allah helps a Muslim as long as that Muslim is helping his brother.

But it is also possible for the commander to command someone to do something that is beneficial for the commanded and which does not benefit the commander upon its action, such is the case with the counsel of an advisor. It is also possible that if he helps the commanded, it will not be to his benefit. It may even be possible that the commanded action may be harmful for the commander, as was the case in the story found in the Qur'ān where a man came from the far end of a city to tell Moses, "The chiefs are taking counsel together about you to slay you. So go away. I do give you only sincere advice" [28:20]. It was in his interest to command Moses to leave, though it was not in his interest to help him do so, for if he had helped Moses escape, his people would have punished him. In fact, one could produce many examples of this nature.

If Allah commands what is beneficial for men, it does not follow necessarily that He should also help them do it. The Qadarīyyah actually believe that Allah cannot help anyone perform any act. However, if one believes that the acts of Allah have wisdom to

them, which is the case even if we are not aware of the wisdom, it does not follow that it should also be wise for Allah to help people do what He commands them to do. On the contrary, His wisdom may determine that it may be best not to help the one He commanded. If we can imagine that one man may ask another man to do something just because he thinks it would be good for the latter, although it would not be good for the former to help him, then that is even more possible and reasonable in the case of Allah.

In short, if it is correct that a wise man can ask someone to do something but not help him in doing that deed, it is all the more proper for Allah, according to His wisdom, to do the same. If He commands someone to do something and helps him carry it out, He will be both creating it and commanding it. It will be the object of His creative will as well as His prescriptive will. But if He does not help in the performance of the act, it will only be the object of His command, not of creation. It will be wise not to create it; it may even be wiser to create its opposite.

Obviously, the creation of one of the contraries rules out the creation of the other. For example, if He creates an illness that leads a person to submit to Him, repent for his sins and seek His forgiveness, soften his heart, lower his vanity, do away with his arrogance and rebellion, that would be in contradiction to the creation of health which would not lead to all the good consequences just mentioned. Similarly, the injustice that an oppressor creates may often lead to similar results for the oppressed as those mentioned above for the sick. Such results are not produced by justice when it is created, even though it is (apparently) in man's best interest to have justice.

It is difficult or impossible for man to understand the wisdom that lies behind Allah's creation or His command. The Qadarīyyah attempted to understand it in an incorrect manner by conceiving Allah on human patterns. This resulted in denying that His actions may have some purpose that can be attributed to Him.

(8) No imagination (*wahm*) can conceive of Him, and no understanding (*fahm*) can fathom Him.

Allah has said, "They comprehend Him not in knowledge" [20:110]. In *Aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ*[23] it is stated that the meaning of *tawahhum* means 'to imagine or surmise', while *fahm* means 'to know, to

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[23]The author of the *Ṣiḥāḥ* is Abū Naṣr Ismā'īl Ibn Ḥammad At-Turkī Al-Jawharī (d. 393/1003].

understand'. What is meant here by the author, Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, is that neither can imagination conceive of Him nor can understanding fathom Him. Some say that *wahm* means to envisage a thing, such as thinking that it is like such-and-such. *Fahm* (understanding), on the other hand, is what is comprehended through reason. No one knows what Allah is like, except Allah Himself. We know Him through His attributes. (We know) that He is Unique, Absolute, He begets not, nor was He begotten, and there is none like unto Him. (Similarly we know that He is) "Allah: there is no god but He. He is the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. No slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. His are all the things in the heavens and on earth" [2:255]. And, "Allah is He, besides whom there is no other god, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace, the Guardian of the Path, the Preserver of Safety, Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme. Glory be to Allah. High is He above the partners they attribute to Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the One Who Evolves All Things, the Giver of Forms. To Him belong the most beautiful names. Whatever is in the heavens and on earth declares His praise and glory, and He is Exalted in Might and Wise" [59:23-24].

(9) He does not resemble mankind.

This is a refutation of the view that conceives of the Creator in a fashion analogous to the created. Allah has Himself said, "There is nothing like unto Him; and He is All-Hearing and All-Seeing" [42:11]. This verse does not mean to deny Allah's attributes, as the heretics argue. Abū Ḥanīfah stated in *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, "Allah is not like any of His creatures, nor is any creature like Him... His attributes are different from their attributes. He knows but not as we know; He acts but not as we act; and He sees but not as we see."[24] Nu'aym Ibn Ḥammad stated, "Whoever likens Allah to any of His created beings is an infidel. Whoever negates the attributes which Allah has affirmed of Himself is also an infidel. There is no anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) in the attributes which Allah has affirmed of Himself or which His Messenger has affirmed of Him." Isḥāq Ibn Rahawayh[25] stated, "Whoever describes Allah and likens His attributes with the attributes of any one of His creatures has denied (or disbelieved in) Allah, the Most High."

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[24]See *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar* with commentary by Mullah 'Alī Al-Qarī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyyah, 1404/1984), p. 24.

[25]For the words quoted here, see Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, entry 937.

He also said, "The mark of Jahm and his followers is their false claim of anthropomorphism against the Ahl as-Sunnah. In fact, they are the ones who deny the divine attributes." Many of the leaders of the Elders have stated that the mark of the Jahmīyyah is their calling the Ahl as-Sunnah anthropomorphists. Actually, there has not been anyone who negated any of the attributes of Allah except that he called those who affirmed such attributes anthropomorphists. The Qaramatah and philosophers who completely deny Allah's attributes, and say that we cannot call Him Knowing or Powerful, dub anyone who calls Allah by these names an anthropomorphist. In their opinion, participation in a name is also participation in its connotation. And there are also the extreme Jahmis. They affirm Allah's names but they say they are simply metaphors. According to them, if anyone says that Allah is really Knowing or Powerful, he is an anthropomorphist.

Whoever denies Allah's attributes, and claims that He has no knowledge, power, speech or live, will call anyone who affirms these aspects of Allah anthropomorphists (*mushābbihūn*) or corporealists (*mujassimūn*). That is, the books of the Jahmīyyah, Mu'tazilah and Rafiḍah, and all others who negate Allah's attributes always reiterate the charge that those who affirm said attributes are anthropomorphists and corporealists. It is written in their books that among the corporealists are "the people called the Mālikīs who follow Mālik Ibn 'Anas and the people called the Shāfi'īs who follow Muḥammad Ibn Idrīs." Even their commentators on the Qur'ān, such as 'Abdul-Jabbār and Az-Zamakhsharī, have labeled all those who affirm Allah's attributes or believe in seeing Him as anthropomorphists and corporealists. These terms became very common in later works of such groups.

However, when the scholars of the Ahl as-Sunnah use such terms they do not imply that negating *tashbīh* means negating the attributes of Allah. They do not use that term for the people who affirm Allah's attributes. Rather, what they say is that there can be no comparison between Allah's names, attributes and actions and those of His creatures. In the quote above from Abū Ḥanīfah, he stated that His knowledge is not like our knowledge, His power is not like our power, and His sight is not like our sight. That is the meaning of the verse, "Nothing is like unto Him; and He is All-Hearing and All-Seeing" [42:11]. What is negated is likeness and what is affirmed is the attribute.

The author, Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, himself later mentions the point that negation of likeness does not necessarily mean the negation of divine attributes.

To clarify the matter further, in theology, it is not allowable to use analogical arguments where the major and the minor terms are equivalent, or syllogistic arguments where all the terms are of the same category. Since nothing is like Allah, He cannot be conceived as the analogy of anything; nor can He be brought with another under one category and made the subject of a syllogism. This is the reason the theologians and philosophers who employ these arguments do not arrive at any certain truth: their propositions contradict each other. And when they themselves see that their arguments are equally inconclusive, they end in stupefaction and confusion.

The argument that should be employed here is the argument of priority (*qiyās al-awla*), whether its form is syllogistic or analogical. Allah states, "To Allah applies the highest similitude" [16:60]. The argument of priority means that if a contingent or possible being is qualified with an excellence which is flawless and positive, unaffected by any non-being, then the Eternal and Necessary Being should be all the more qualified with it. And if a species of that excellence is found in the created beings, it must be derived from God, its Creator, Lord and Controller, Who deserves its attribute more than anyone else. On the other hand, when an imperfection or a defect, which is the want of excellence, is negated of any created being, possible or contingent, it must be negated of Allah in the first place.[26]

It is very strange that the extreme negators of divine attributes use the above verse [42:11] to deny Allah's attributes and names. They state that the Necessary Being cannot have this or that attribute. They also state that the foundation of philosophy is to resemble Allah as much as possible. For them, that is the consummation of human perfection. Some scholars who use the same phrase sympathize with them and they recount that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Cultivate in yourselves the virtues of Allah."[27] But if they deny the attributes, what attributes are people supposed to cultivate? Since Allah is not like any created being, nothing created is like Allah. However, this fact is denied by the Christians, incarnationists and monists, may the curse of Allah be upon them.

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[26]For a discussion of this point, see Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *As-Sawā'iq al-Murṣalāh 'alā al-Jahmīyyah wa al-Mu'attilah*, abridged by Muḥammad Ibn Al-Musalī (Beirut: Dār an-Nadwa, 1405/1984), vol. 1, pp. 215-217.

[27]This *ḥadīth* is not found in any collection of *ḥadīth* and is not to be ascribed to the Prophet (peace be on him].

Since the denial of Allah's likeness to created beings implies the denial of likeness of created beings to Allah, the author has contented himself with saying that Allah does not resemble human beings (*al-anām*). *Anām* literally means mankind. Some say that it includes all of creation, while others say it refers to all living creatures. Some say it specifically refers to human beings and jinns. But the apparent meaning of the verse, "He has made the earth for *al-anām*" [55:10] is stronger support for the first opinion than the other opinions. And Allah knows best.

(10) He is Living and will never die. He is All-Sustaining and never sleeps.

Allah has said, "Allah: there is no god but He, the Living, the All-Sustaining. Slumber does not overtake Him, nor does sleep" [2:255]. To negate slumber and sleep is to affirm perfect life and all-sustaining power. Allah also says, "*Alif Lām Mīm*. Allah: there is no god besides Him, the Living and the All-Sustaining" [3:1-3]; "And faces humble themselves before the Living, the All-Sustaining" [20:111]; "Put your trust in Him Who lives and dies not, and celebrate His praise" [25:58]; and, "He is the Living One, there is no god but He" [40:65]. And the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah does not sleep, and it does not behoove Him to sleep."[28]

Having negated resemblance (*tashbīh*), the author points out what distinguishes Allah from His creatures. The first distinction is that Allah is Living and will never die. The quality of everlasting life is something exclusive to Him and does not pertain to His creatures; they all will die. A second distinction is that He sustains everything and never sleeps or tires. This characteristic distinguishes Him from His creatures, as His creatures do sleep and get tired. The words of the author imply that the negation of resemblance does not amount to the negation of His attributes. On the contrary, Allah is qualified with all the attributes of perfection, as He is the most perfect Being.

The everlasting life is not like the transitory life. That is why the life of this world is pleasure, play and amusement. "But the home in the Hereafter will be the life indeed" [29:64]. The worldly life is like a sleep and the life of the Hereafter is like awakening. But one cannot say that the life of the Hereafter is the perfect life, for it is the life of a created being. Rather we say that the Living One is He

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[28]This is part of a *ḥadīth* recorded by Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 179, 293. Also see Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddimah*, 195, 196; Ibn Ḥibban, 266; Aḥmad, 4:395, 401 and 405.

Whose life is inseparable from His essence; He has it by Himself. And it is He Who will grant eternal life to created beings. That is, life is eternal because Allah makes it eternal, not because eternity is a quality that is necessary to it. This differs from the life of the Lord, as do all of His attributes (differ from the attributes of the created), which is essential to Him. Hence His attributes are as they behoove Him, and the attributes of the creatures are as they behoove them.

These two names of Allah, Al-Ḥayy and Al-Qayyūm, are mentioned together three times in the Qur'ān, as was quoted above. They are among the greatest names of Allah. Some even say that they are (together) the greatest and most majestic name of Allah. (They are so considered) because they suggest the loftiest and most perfect excellence of Allah. Al-Qayyūm signifies eternity and everlastingness, which Al-Qadīm (discussed earlier) does not. It also signifies that He exists by Himself. That is what is meant by the term "the Necessary Being". Al-Qayyūm is more intensive than Al-Qayyām because the use of the letter *wāw* is stronger, or more forceful, than the letter *alif*. Furthermore, Al-Qayyūm signifies that He sustains Himself, as the scholars of *tafsīr* and language agree. That is actually known by necessity.

Does it also imply that He sustains other things and takes care of them? On this point there are two opinions. The strongest opinion is that it also implies that. It also implies that He always sustains the creation and His sustaining is perfect, since it is in the intensive form. He is there eternally, never fails to exist, never loses sight of things for a moment, never suffers loss or want, nor does He die or perish. He is the Eternal, the Everlasting, Who will always be and will always have the most perfect attributes.

Al-Qayyūm is joined with Al-Ḥayy. This also necessitates that Allah is qualified with all the perfect attributes. It also implies that He has those attributes from eternity and will have them forever without their undergoing any diminution or reduction. That is why the verse, "Allah: there is no god but He, the Living (Al-Ḥayy), the Necessary and All-Sustaining Being (Al-Qayyūm)" [2:255], is the greatest verse in the Qur'ān, as is mentioned in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from the Prophet (peace be on him).[29]

All of the beautiful names of Allah revolve around these two names, and their meanings revert to these two. Life encompasses and necessitates all of the perfect attributes of Allah. This is true

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[29]Muslim, *Salāt al-Musāfirīn wa Qasriha*, 810; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1460; Aḥmad, 5:142.

because the want of an attribute is due to the weakness of a life. But Allah's life is the most complete and perfect life. Hence, it is qualified with the best attributes free from any defects. Al-Qayyūm, on the other hand, implies Allah's self-sufficiency, freedom from all wants, and His perfect power. He sustains Himself and sustains all others. Everything depends on Him and He depends on none. Hence, these two names imply all the perfect names of Allah.

(11) He creates without being in need to do so, and provides for His creation without any trouble (b*ilā* mu'unah).

Allah says in the Qur'ān, "I have only created jinns and mankind that they may serve and worship Me. No sustenance do I require from them, nor do I require that they should feed Me. For it is Allah Who gives all sustenance, Lord of Power and Unbreakable Might" [51:56-58]. He also says, "Mankind, it is you that have need of Allah. But Allah is free from all wants, worthy of praise" [35:15]. Another verse reads, "Allah is free from all wants, and it is you that are needy" [47:38]. Finally, Allah also says, "Say (Muḥammad): Will I take for my protector any other than Allah, the Maker of the heavens and the earth? And He it is Who feeds but is not fed" [6:14].

Abū Dharr reported that the Prophet (peace be on him) said (in a narration from His Lord), "My servants! If all of you, the first and last, men and jinns, were as pious as the most pious soul among you, that would add nothing to My Kingdom. My servants! If all of you, first and last, men and jinns, were as wicked as the most wicked among you, that would not reduce My Kingdom in the least. My servants! If all of you, first and last, men and jinns, were to gather in one place and ask of Me, and I were to grant everyone his request, that would not decrease what I have any more than a needle decreases the water when it is dipped into the sea..." [recorded by Muslim].[30]

The author's statement, *bilā mu'unah* means without any burden or difficulty.

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[30]Muslim, 2577; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2497; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4257; Aḥmad 5:154, 160, 177.

(12) He causes death without fear, and He resurrects (the dead) with no effort.

Contrary to the belief of the philosophers and their followers, death is an existential attribute. Allah says, "He Who created death and life so that He might try which of you is best in deed" [67:2]. It is plain that what is nothing cannot be said to have been created. A *ḥadīth* states, "Death will be brought on the Day of Judgment in the form of a beautiful ram. And it will be slaughtered between Paradise and Hell."[31] If death were an accident (*aradh*), Allah could make it a substance or physical body. There are other instances, too, of such metamorphosis or substantiation. For example, a *ḥadīth* says that "[g]ood deeds will come to their doer in the form of a handsome young man, and bad deeds will appear in the ugliest form."[32] Another *ḥadīth* states about (unmindful reading of) the Qur'ān, that it will come in the form of a youth, emaciated and pale.[33] And about human deeds, it is said that they "will be weighed in the balance."[34] It is plain that things that are weighed are tangible objects, not accidents. In yet another *ḥadīth* it states that "the two *sūrahs*, Al-Baqarah and Āli-'Imrān, will, on the Day of Judgment, form a shade over their reader, as if they were two clouds or two flocks of birds spreading their wings in the air."[35] And also in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it states, "The deeds of human beings go up into Heaven."[36]

As for the discussion of resurrection, it will be taken up later.

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[31]Al-Bukhārī, 4370; Muslim, *Al-Jannah wa Ṣifat Na'imihā*, 2849; At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr,* 3155; Ad-Dārimī, *Ar-Riqāq*, 2814; Aḥmad, 2:377, 423, 513.

[32]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Aḥmad, 4:287, 295, 296; Al-Ḥakīm, 1:37, 40. Its chain is *ḥasan*.

[33]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Aḥmad, 5:348, 352; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Adab*, 3781; Al-Ḥakīm, 1:256. According to Al-Arnawūṭ, its chain is *ḥasan*.

[34]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Aḥmad, 2:213; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2641; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4300; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Īmān*, 1:6; Ibn Ḥibban, *Az-Zuhd*, 2523. It is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[35]Aḥmad, 5:348, 352; Ad-Dārimī, 2:450, 451; Muslim, *Ṣalāt al-Musafirīn*, 804.

[36]Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣifat as-Salāt*, 799; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 770; At-Tirmidhī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 404; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Iftitāḥ*, 2:196; Aḥmad, 4:355, 356.

(13) He has always existed with His attributes, even before the creation of the world, which did not add anything to His attributes that were not already present. Just as He is Eternal along with His attributes, so He is Everlasting along with them.

Allah is qualified from eternity with attributes of perfection, both attributes of essence and action. It is not permissible to believe that Allah acquired an attribute after He did not have it, because His attributes are attributes of perfection, hence their absence would imply imperfection. It is not conceivable that He was first imperfect and then He became perfect. However, this is not cause to deny the active or voluntary attributes of Allah, such as creating and forming, causing life and death, expanding, contracting and folding, ascending the Throne, coming and descending, being happy or angry, and other similar attributes that He Himself or His Prophet (peace be on him) have mentioned of Him, regardless of whether we comprehend their meanings or not.

We do not delve into the meaning of these attributes, nor do we interpret them according to our whims. But we are aware of their basic meanings. As Imām Mālik was asked about the verse, "He then settled (*istiwā*) Himself on the Throne" [7:54], "How did He settle Himself on the Throne?" He answered, "*Istiwā* is known to us, but its modality is not known." We believe that the divine attributes are eternal even though what they refer to may happen at one time and not at another. For example, in the *ḥadīth* on intercession, the Prophet (peace be on him) stated, "Allah today became so angry as He has never been before and will never be again."[37] The possibility of such acts, in that manner, cannot be ruled out. However, they are not to be generalized. We cannot say that He came to be such-and-such after He was not such. One does not say of a person, if he speaks today and was also speaking yesterday, "He has now started speaking." It also cannot be said that perhaps before he could not speak because he was a baby or mute, and then, when he spoke, one says, "Now he has spoken." The one who is silent not due to any obstacle to speech is still called a speaker because he has the ability to speak, that is, he may speak if and when he wishes. When he actually speaks, he is called a speaker-in-action. Similarly, a scribe, when he is writing, is a

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[37]Part of a long *ḥadīth* on intercession in Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Anbiyā'*, 3340, 3361; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 194; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2436; Aḥmad, 2:435, 436.

writer-in-action but that does not mean that he is no longer a scribe when he is not actually writing.

The concept of things occurring with respect to the Lord has been denied by the blameworthy type of theology. But in the Qur'ān and Sunnah it is neither affirmed nor denied. There is ambiguity surrounding this question. If one means by such negation that nothing created happens to Allah or that He does not acquire an attribute He did not have before, then the negation is correct. But if one intends by that to deny the volitional attributes and imply that He does not do what He wills, does not speak what and when He wills, He is not pleased or angered in His own unique way, or denies the attributes that He has used for Himself of descending, mounting and coming in a way befitting His Majesty, then this negation is wrong.

When the exponents of the condemned dialectics deny without qualification that things may happen to Allah, an ordinary Muslim accepts their argument because he believes that they are denying something that is not becoming to Allah. But if the Muslim accepts that negation then he must, as a consequence, also negate the volitional and active attributes of Allah and consider these non-essential to Him. He is led to this conclusion because he accepted the first premise of negation without actually realizing the details of that premise. Had he analyzed it, he would have not fallen prey to them.

The question of whether the attributes are over and above (*za'id 'ala*) the essence is likewise ambiguous. The word "other" (*ghayr*) is also ambiguous. It can refer to what is not the essence itself, or it can refer to what can be separated from the essence. This is why the scholars of the Ahl as-Sunnah neither say without qualification that the attributes of Allah are other than Allah, nor do they say without qualification that they are not other than Allah. For to say without qualification that they are other may suggest that they are separate from His essence; similarly, to say that they are not other without qualifying that statement may suggest that they are the same as His essence. Since the word "other" (*ghayr*) is ambiguous, one should avoid using it without defining its exact sense. For if one means by it that there is an essence existing by itself separate from the attributes which are over and above it, that is not correct.

If, though, it is used to mean that the attributes are over and above the essence in the sense that we understand by the essence something that we do not understand by an attribute, then it is correct. But it is not the case that there is no essence existing out there divested of all attributes. In reality, the essence qualified by the attributes of perfection essential to it is inseparable from them. It is only in the mind that the two are separated from each other and that

the two are imagined to exist by themselves. In reality, there is no essence without an attribute; this is simply not possible. Even if there were no attribute present except that of existence, even that would not have been separate from the essence. But in one's mind they can be conceived of as an essence and an existence, each separate from the other, though in reality they cannot be and are not separate.

Some of them say that the attribute is neither one with the essence nor different from it. This statement is correct in one sense: the attribute is neither the essence which it qualifies and which the mind assumes to be without attributes, nor is it separate from the essence; rather, the essence, along with the attributes that qualify it, are one thing, single and non-multiple.

Therefore, one must distinguish between the statement, "The attributes are aside from the essence" and the statement, "The attributes of Allah are other than Allah." The second statement is erroneous because when one mentions Allah, this includes His attributes, as opposed to when one mentions His essence, as this does not include His attributes. What is meant is that the attributes are over and above what is affirmed concerning the essence. Allah is the essence that is qualified by His ever-present attributes. That is why the author said, "He has always existed with His attributes." Note that he did not say, "He and His attributes are always existing" because in this case the conjunction would permit the possibility of difference between them. Similarly, while debating the Jahmīyyah, Imām Aḥmad said, "We do not say, 'Allah and His knowledge, Allah and His power, Allah and His light; we say, 'Allah with His knowledge, His power and His light. He is the only God, Glorified and Exalted be He."

When you say, "I seek refuge in Allah," you are seeking refuge in the holy essence that has the perfect, constant, holy attributes that are absolutely inseparable from Him. But when you say, "I seek refuge in the might of Allah," you are seeking refuge in one of the attributes of Allah, and you, furthermore, are not seeking refuge in anything other than Allah.

This meaning is understood from the term essence (*dhat*). Originally the term was not used except as a noun in status constructus. For example, one would say, "*dhat wujud*," ('one having existence'), "*dhat 'izzah*"('one of power'), "*dhat 'ilm*" ('one of knowledge'), and so on. Hence, dhat means 'one having such-and-such'. Actually, dhat is the feminine of *dhu* ('one having such-and-such'). This is the original meaning of the word. Therefore, it is clear that dhat cannot at all be conceived without an attribute, even

though the mind can imagine an essence stripped of all attributes, as it can also imagine an impossibility.

This fact lies behind various invocations of the Prophet (peace be on him) such as, "I seek the protection of Allah's glory and power from the evil that I am facing or might face."[38] And, "I seek protection in Allah's perfect words from the evil of things He created."[39] Obviously, the Prophet (peace be on him) never sought the protection of anything other than Allah. Similarly, the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "O Allah, I seek protection in Your pleasure against Your displeasure, and in Your forgiveness against Your punishment, and in Yourself from You."[40] Also, "We seek refuge in Your Majesty against assassination from behind."[41] And, "I seek refuge in the radiance of Your faith which lightens up all darkness."[42]

There is also their question, "Is a name the essence of the named or not?" Many people have erred on this question. The correct view is that the name sometimes means the object named and sometimes it means the word that denotes the object. For example, when you say, "Allah says such-and-such," "Allah hears him who praises Him," and so on, you mean the named Himself. But when you say, "Allah is an Arabic name, Ar-Raḥmān is an Arabic name, Ar-Raḥmān is one of the beautiful names," and so on, you are referring to the name itself and not the named. Therefore, one cannot say without qualification that the name is other than the named. For the word "other", again, is ambiguous. If you mean to say that the word

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[38]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Muslim, *As-Salām*, 2202; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 3891; At-Tirmidhī, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 2081; Ibn Mājah, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 3522; Aḥmad, 4:217.

[39]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Muslim, *Adh-Dhikr wa ad-Du'ā'* 2708; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3437; Aḥmad, 6:377, 409.

[40]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1427; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3561; An-Nasā'ī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 3:248; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1179; Aḥmad, 1:96, 118, 150; Muslim, 486.

[41]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Aḥmad, 2:125; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 5074; An-Nasā'ī, *Isti'ādhah*, 8:282; Ibn Mājah, *Ad-Du'ā'*, 3871. Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[42]This has been recorded by Ibn Hishām, *As-Sīrah an-Nabawīyyah*, ed. by Muṣṭafa As-Saqqa and others (Cairo: Maktabah Muṣṭafa Al-Ḥalabī, 1375/1955), vol. 1, p. 420; Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Jamī al-Bayān 'an Tawīl Ayī al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafa Al-Babī Al-Ḥalabī and Sons, 1388/1968), 3rd edition, vol. I, p. 80; Az-Zurqānī, in his *Commentary on Al-Mawāhib al-Ladunnīyyah of Al-Qastalānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1393/1973), 3rd edition, vol. 1, p. 305; and At-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, *Ad-Du'ā'*, on the authority of 'Abdullah Ibn Ja'far, with the remark that it is a *mursal ḥadīth*. In his footnotes to the *Commentary*, Al-Albānī called this *ḥadīth* weak.

is not the same as what it means, that is true. But if you mean to say that Allah was in the beginning without names, and then created names for Himself or His creatures gave Him names of their making, that is a completely false and blasphemous view of Allah's names.[43]

The author has alluded to this point in these words, "He is qualified with His attributes eternally from before the creation of the world." He refutes the view of the Mu'tazilah, Jahmīyyah and those Shī'ah who are in agreement with them. These people claim that Allah did not at first have the power to act or to speak, and then He came to have such powers. Action and speech became possible after it was first impossible. The impossible changed into the possible.

Ibn Kullāb, Al-Ash'arī and their followers put the point somewhat differently. They say that action became possible for Him after it was impossible from Him. As for speech, in their view, it is not related to divine will and power; it is one single speech necessary to His essence.

The source of this view is the Jahmīyyah. They said that events cannot be eternal. They have to have a beginning, for an infinite regress of events is impossible. Therefore, they claim, it is impossible for Allah to have been acting or speaking of His free will since eternity. Furthermore, it was impossible for Him to have the power to do that because power to do something impossible is impossible. But this is wrong. This implies that the world is not contingent, even though it is in fact contingent. What comes into existence after it did not exist must be possible. And possibility is not confined to any particular time, because whatever time we think of, the existence of that possible thing in that time cannot be ruled out. Hence, there is no particular time for the possible to begin or to take place; it is eternally possible. Therefore, Allah must have always had the power from eternity to bring the possible into existence. It also follows that a series of events in the past does not have to have a beginning at a point.

The Jahmīyyah and those who agree with them say that they do not accept the possibility of a series of events that has no beginning. They concede it only on the condition that the series is preceded by non-being. In their view, events as a class cannot be eternal; as a class they have to be contingent, not eternal. However, they do not believe that the events have to come into existence at a particular time. In short, they allow the possibility of a beginning-less series

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[43]For a detailed discussion of this point, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, vol. 6, pp. 185-212.

of events on the condition that they are preceded by non-being. But they do not uphold that possibility regarding a class of events.

We would comment on this view as follows. You say that events as a class should have a beginning. Now, if you believe that things can become possible after they were not possible, that there is no particular time for the realization of this possibility, and that for any time we may think of, it can happen before that, then you are forced to admit that this possibility is eternally there; otherwise you will have to say that the impossible can become possible without anything happening there or any cause coming into existence. We know that the transformation of a contingency, as such, or of the events as a class, or of things of a class, or of such similar things, from impossibility to possibility – that they become possible after they were impossible – without any cause happening, is completely ruled out by reason. It would mean that the class that was essentially impossible has become essentially possible, for in your view events as a class become possible after being impossible.

Furthermore, this transformation is not tied to any particular time, because whatever time we may think of, it can happen before that. It follows that the transformation was always possible; hence, the impossible was always possible. This is a more far-reaching claim than our view that the contingent is eternally possible. This means that they have to admit to more than what we were trying to make them admit and which is what they were trying to avoid. One can imagine (our view, which states) that a contingent thing is possible and that this possibility is eternal. But one cannot imagine (the conclusion they are forced into, which states) that an impossible is possible. That, obviously, is a contradiction. That being so, what can one say about the proposition that the impossible has always been possible? This topic has been further elaborated in its proper places.

In sum, concerning the question of whether events as a class are unending in the future as well as in the past, or in neither, or only in the future, or only in the past, there are three views among Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers. The most untenable view is that it is impossible to be unending, either in the future or in the past; this is the view of Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān and Abū Al-Hudhayl Al-'Allaf. The second view states that it can be unending only in the future and not in the past. This is held by many theologians belong to various schools, such as the Jahmīyyah, Mu'tazilah, Karramīyyah, Ash'arīs and Shī'īs, as well as some jurists and other scholars. The third view is that it can be unending in both the past and the future. This is the view of the leading scholars of *ḥadīth*. In fact, this is one of the more important doctrines. No one has stated the fourth

possibility, that it can be unending only in the past but not in the future.

There is no doubt that the majority of the world from all different peoples say that everything other than Allah is created. Everything came into being after it was not existing. That is what all the messengers and their followers of Muslims, Jews, Christians and others believe in. It is known, by natural instinct, that it is impossible for the act to co-exist with the Actor from eternity to eternity. Since the existence of an endless series of events in the future is not inconsistent with Allah being the Last, without anything coming after Him, the existence of an endless series of events in the past is not inconsistent with Allah being the First, without anything going before Him. Allah is always there doing and speaking whatever and whenever He wills from eternity to eternity. Allah says in the Qur'ān, "Thus Allah does whatever He wills" [3:40]; "But Allah does whatever He likes" [2:253]; "He is the Lord of the Glorious Throne, and He does whatever He pleases" [85:15-16]; "And if all the trees on earth were pens, and oceans were ink, with seven oceans behind it to add to its supply, yet the words of Allah would not be exhausted (in the writing)" [31:27]; "Say: If the oceans were ink wherewith to write out the words of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it for its aid" [18:109].

What is affirmed here is the perfection that can possibly exist. Hence, if the class of acts is everlasting, it is possible and certainly more perfect that He precedes every individual thing such that no part of the world can co-exist with Him in any respect. As for permanence of action, it is also perfection. Since action is an attribute of perfection, its permanence will mean permanence of perfection.

People say that regress (as in "infinite regression") is an ambiguous term, it is neither affirmed nor denied in the Book of Allah or in the Sunnah,. hence, we are not bound to adhere to the term. However, regress is of three types: necessary, impossible and possible. In the case of infinite regression of causes, this is impossible, for we cannot imagine that one cause derives its causative power from another cause, and that from a third cause and so on ad infinitum. The example of necessary regress is divine action in the future. Both reason and revelation affirm that whenever something in the use of the people of Paradise ends, Allah will create another and then a third, and so on, ad infinitum. The same is true about Allah's action in the past, for every act of His is preceded by another act. For example, He has been speaking since eternity whenever He pleased; obviously, His attribute of speech is not

something that has happened to Him after a time. The same is true of the other acts that are essential to His life, for every living being acts and the difference between the living and dead is action. That is why a number of the Elders stated, "Living is acting." 'Uthmān Ibn Sa'•d said, "Every living thing acts. And our Lord has never been for a moment imperfect, without speaking, willing or acting."

An example of possible regress is the things that Allah does, and this regress may be both in the past and in the future. Since Allah is Living, Powerful, Willing and Speaking from eternity – all this being part of His essence – He would be doing one thing or another according to these attributes. Action is more complete than inaction. However, this does not necessitate that objects co-exist with Him. Allah precedes every single object He creates and is not preceded by any of them. Every created object has something first that went before it, except the Creator, Who has no first before Him. He alone is the Creator and everything else is created and comes into existence after a time when it was non-existent.

Reason rejects every other view. All those who believe that Allah has power to act from eternity must either believe that it was possible for Him to act from eternity or that He has been acting from eternity. Any other view would be inconsistent with their faith. For example, there is the view that although Allah has power to act from eternity, action itself is inconceivable, and were He to will it, it would not happen. Another view is that He could not at all will it, even though He had power over it. These views are self-contradictory. In short, revelation and reason both uphold the view that everything other than Allah is contingent, that it comes into existence after it was not existing. As for the view that Allah was inactive at first and then acted, it is supported neither by revelation nor by reason. On the contrary, both uphold the opposite.

Abū Al-Ma'ālī, in his *Al-Irshād*,[44] and many other thinkers have objected to the concept of infinite regression in the past. They argue that it is possible for you to say that you would give another person a dollar following every dollar that you give. But it is not possible to say that you would give a dollar only if you had given one before. But this example is not relevant. The relevant example is to say that you did not give a dollar unless you had given one before. That is, you make one past act precede another past act, as you make one future act follow another future act. The example that they give, on the other hand, says that you would not give a dollar unless you had

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[44]*Kitāb al-Irshād*, ed. by Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsa and 'Alī 'Abdul-Mun'im 'Abdul-Hāmid (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1369/1950), pp. 26-27.

given one before. This involves the negation of a future act until something similar happens in the future and precedes it. It is the negation of a future act before it happens, and that is ruled out. But the negation of a past act unless another past act precedes it is possible. A gift in the future is to come from one who offers the gift. And an act of the future which has a beginning and an end cannot be preceded by something that is endless, because nothing that is endless can exist in something that ends.

(14) It is not the case that He acquired the name Creator (Al-Khāliq) only after creating (something), or the name Originator (Al-Bārī) only after originating (something).

From these words it appears that the author denies an infinite regression of events in the past. He does not, however, deny an infinite chain of events in the future, as we will see in his words that we will discuss later, "Paradise and Hell are something created, but they will not perish or disappear." This is also the view of the majority of Muslim thinkers, as we stated earlier. However, it is not correct to deny regress in the past or in the future. Jahm and his followers have denied it. They say that Paradise and Hell will finally disappear. We will discuss this view later and show that is wrong.

Those who uphold the possibility of an infinite series of contingent events both in the past and in the future are closer to the truth than those who uphold only one part of it. For Allah is eternally living, and activity is essential to life. Hence, He is doing from eternity whatever He pleases as He has described Himself. He has said, "He is the Lord of the Throne of Glory, the Doer of whatever He wills" [85:15-16]. These verses prove the following truths:

First, Allah acts as He wills and pleases.

Second, He has always done so. This is alluded to by the description being a point of praise of Himself, a real excellence that He cannot be thought of as losing at any time. He has said, "Is then One Who creates like one who does not create? Will you not receive admonition" [16:17]. Since this is an aspect of His perfection and majesty, it cannot be that He acquired it after He did not have it.

Third, when He wills a thing, He does it. Since the particle ma, rendered here as "whatever," is a general relative pronoun, the verse means that He does anything He wills. This concerns His will to do something by Himself. As for His will regarding the acts of His creatures, it is something different. If He wants (or commands) any person to do something but does not want to help him and make him do it, He does not create the act, even though the person may have

tried to do it. The act will not happen unless He wills to make him do it. This point was not understood by the Free-willers (Qadrīyyah), or by the determinists (Jabarīyyah). Consequently, they went astray on the issue of predestination (*qadr*). They failed to distinguish between Allah's will (or command) that man should do an act and His will to make him do the act. We will take up this issue of *qadr* later, God willing.

Fourth, Allah's will and action necessitate each other. What He wills He does, and what He does He has willed. This distinguishes Him from creatures, who often will what they are not able to do and do what they did not intend to do. There is none other than Allah, Who does whatever He wills.

Fifth, the verses prove that Allah has numerous wills corresponding to His acts, a separate will for each act. This is what is known by natural instincts. Allah continues willing and doing what He wills.

Sixth, whatever is proper for Allah to will is also permissible for Him to do. If He wills to descend to the lowest heaven every night, to come on the Day of Judgment for judgment, to be seen by His servants, to appear to them as He wills, to address them, to smile at them, and any other thing He so desires, nothing of that would be impossible for Him, for He does whatever He wills. We confirmed all of those actions based on the truthfulness of the one who informed us (that is, the Prophet) of those actions. If the truthful one stated it, we must believe in it. Also, He blots out or confirms whatever He wills. He is engaged every day in one thing or the other, Glorious and Exalted be He.

The view that contingents have a beginning implies that there was a time when Allah was inactive, that in the beginning He was not doing anything and then He started "doing" something.

But this does not imply that the world is eternal. Everything other than Allah is contingent and possible and comes into being by the creative act of Allah. By itself, it is nothing but non-being. Want or need is an essential quality of things other than Allah, Who alone exists necessarily by Himself, and is absolutely Self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency is part of His essence.

People hold two views concerning the questions, "Was this world created from matter or not? How did this world begin?" Allah says in the Qur'ān, "He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and His Throne was over the waters" [11:17]. Al-Bukhārī and others recorded from 'Imrān Ibn Ḥussayn that the people of Yemen asked the Prophet (peace be on him), "We have come to you to learn the faith. We wish to ask you about this matter (creation)." The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "(In the beginning)

there was only Allah, and nothing was before Him." Another narration of the *ḥadīth* ends with, "And there was nothing along with Him." A third version states, "And there was nothing other than He." The Prophet (peace be on him) then said, "His throne was on the waters. And He recorded everything in *adh-Dhikr*, and He created the heavens and the earth." Another version ends with, "Then He created the heavens and the earth."[45] The Dhikr referred to above is the Preserved Table (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*), as is indicated in the verse, "We wrote in the Books after the *Dhikr*: My righteous servants will inherit the earth" [21:105]. What is written in the *Dhikr* is referred to as *dhikr* (in Arabic) in the same way that what is written in a book (*kitāb*) is referred to as *kitāb*.

People have interpreted the above *ḥadīth* in two ways. Some say that the Prophet (peace be on him) was stating that Allah has existed all by Himself in eternity, and He continued to be like that for a time, and then He began creating all things. Things, therefore, as individual objects or as classes are preceded by non-being or being nothing. Time, for example, began to exist in a non-temporal setting. Allah became acting after He was not doing anything from eternity until the time He started to act. And during that time of inactivity, nothing was possible for Him.

The second opinion is that the Prophet (peace be on him) was talking about the beginning of this witnessed world that Allah created in six days, after which He ascended the Throne as the Qur'ān describes in many places. (For example, "He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and His Throne was over the waters" [11:7].] It is recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* from 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah fixed the measures of things fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth. And His throne was on the waters."[46] The Prophet (peace be on him) thus stated that Allah ordained this world, which He created in six days, fifty thousand years before He created it and that His throne was on the water at that time.

The proofs for the correctness of the second opinion are:

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[45]The words, "And nothing was before Him," occur in Al-Bukhārī, 7418 and 3191; Ibn Khūzaymah, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, ed. by Dr. 'Abdul-'Azīz Ibn Ibrāhīm (Riyadh: Dār Ar-Rushd, 1408/1988), 1st edition, p. 376; At-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 18:497, 498. The words, "And there was nothing with Him (ma'ahu)," which the commentator mentioned, do not occur in any collection of Hadith, authentic or otherwise. However the words, "And there was nothing other than He (*ghayruhu*)," which mean the same, occur in Aḥmad, 4:431, 432.

[46]Muslim, *Al-Qadr*, 2653; At-Tirmidhī, 2156; Aḥmad, 2:169.

First, the people of Yemen (mentioned in the *ḥadīth*) asked, "We came to you to ask you about this thing (*āmr*)," and this alludes to the present existing world. *Āmr* here means *al-ma'mūr* or the object that has been brought into existence by the *āmr* (command of Allah). The Prophet (peace be on him) responded to their question by talking about the being of this existing world and not about all created things as a class, because they did not ask about that. He informed them that the heavens and the earth were created while the Throne was on the waters. He did not tell them about the creation of the Throne as it was (obviously) created before the heavens and the earth.

(Second,) the Prophet said, "There was Allah and nothing was before Him," and, in another narration, "...nothing was with Him." This was his speech in one setting. Therefore, he must have made just one of those statements and some of the narrators simply stated the meaning of the what he said (not the exact wording). The word *qabl* (before) has been authentically narrated from the Prophet in other *aḥādīth*. It is recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, that the Prophet (peace be on him) used to supplicate, "O Allah, You are the First and there was nothing before You."[47] The other two words (reported in the different narrations) have not been reported in any other *ḥadīth*. Therefore, many of the scholars of *ḥadīth*, such as Al-Ḥumaydī, Al-Baghawī and Ibn Al-Āthīr, have only recorded those *aḥādīth* in which the word "before" occurs. If this is correct, then it would mean that there is no reference in the *ḥadīth* to the beginning of things or the first thing created.

(Third,) the words (in the *ḥadīth* are), "Allah was there and there was nothing before him (or 'with Him or 'besides Him), and His Throne was on the waters. And He wrote everything in the Register (*adh-Dhikr*)." He mentioned those things using the conjunction "and" between them. And "He created the heavens and the earth" has been narrated with a conjunction (and) and also with "then". This shows that what he wants to tell them about is the beginning of the heavens and the earth and the things between them – things that were created in six days – and not the beginning of what Allah created before the world. The mention of "the heavens and the earth"

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[47]Part of a *ḥadīth* recorded by Muslim, *Adh-Dhikr*, 2713. Also see Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 5051; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3397; Ibn Mājah, *Ad-Du'ā'*, 3873; Aḥmad, 2:381, 404.

also shows that they were created, but the reference to something prior to them indicates it existed but it was not the first thing created.

(Fourth,) since the *ḥadīth* has been narrated in two different ways, we cannot say with certainty which is correct without some (external) evidence. If one can be shown to be stronger, if someone then claims that the Messenger certainly stated the other, he is definitely wrong. There is nothing in the Book or the Sunnah to support the other (weaker) meaning. It is not permissible to confirm it according to what one thinks the meaning of the *ḥadīth* should be. It is not narrated unconditionally, "There was Allah and nothing was with Him." But it is only narrated in the specifically mentioned context. One cannot, therefore, infer from them that Allah was doing nothing before He created the heavens and the earth.

(Fifth,) the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Allah was there and there was nothing before him (or with Him or besides Him), and His Throne was on the waters." It is not permissible to understand those words as meaning that Allah was by Himself and there was nothing whatsoever created with Him because the words, "and His Throne was on the waters" negates that, because the clause, "and His Throne was on the waters" is either a circumstantial or a conjunctive clause. In both cases, a created object was existing at that time. Hence, it must mean that there was nothing of this witnessed world at that time.[48]

(15) He was qualified with Lordship (*rubūbīyyah*) even when there was nothing to lord over. And He was the Creator even when there was nothing created.

That is, Allah had the quality of being Lord even before anything was there to be lorded over. He also had the quality of being Creator even before anything was created.

Some commentators have drawn attention to the author's saying, "He has been qualified with Lordship (*rubūbīyyah*) and has been the Creator" rather than, "has been qualified with 'creatorship'." This is because the Creator is the One Who brings a thing from non-existence into existence and it has no other meaning. But Ar-Rabb, on the other hand, has many meanings to it. It means Lord, Guardian, Provident and Cherisher, Who nourishes, develops and leads a thing to its destined completion. It is to convey this rich

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[48]For a detailed discussion of this point, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, vol. 18, pp. 210-243.

sense that the author has chosen the word *rubūbīyyah*. This ends what they state.

There is some problem with that because Al-Khaliq not only means the Creator Who brings into existence but also the One Who ordains and determines.

(16) In the same way that He is the "Reviver of life to the Dead", after He has given them life a first time, He deserves this name before bringing them to life; so, too, He deserves the name Creator before He actually created them.

That is, since Allah is called the "Reviver of Life to the Dead" before He has actually revived them, He should be called the Creator before He actually created them. The author has directed these words against the Mu'tazilah and those who agree with their opinion. We have already discussed them and we have concluded that Allah has been doing from eternity whatever He has willed.

(17) This is because He has power over all things (*kulli shayy*). All things depend on Him and are easy for Him. He is not in need of anything. Nothing is like Him. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

This suggests that Allah has attributes from eternity, even before He created the world. However, the discussion of the word kull – 'all', and what it connotes and how the extent of its meaning varies according to the context, will be taken up later, God willing, under the discussion of the speech of Allah.

The Mu'tazilah have distorted the meaning of the verse, "Allah has power over all things" [2:284]. According to them, it means that Allah has power over all things that are in His power. As for human acts, He has no power over them. (This is agreed upon among them.) They dispute, however, the question of whether He can Himself do similar actions. If their interpretation of this verse were correct, it would be similar to saying, "He is Knowing of everything He knows, He creates all that He creates," and other useless statements. In fact, they have denied that He has power over all things.

According to the Ahl as-Sunnah, Allah has power over all things and all possible things are in His power. As for the impossible in itself, such as one and the same thing existing and not existing at one time, it is actually a "nothing"; it is inconceivable. No reasonable person would say that is a "thing". The same is true for

the question of whether Allah can create one like Himself or whether He can kill Himself and other impossibilities.

As for belief in Allah's complete and total Lordship, a fundamental belief, no one can believe that He is Lord of everything unless he believes that He has power over those things. Furthermore, no one believes in His complete and perfect Lordship unless he believes that He has power over all things.

(On this point there is no difference among people.) The dispute has occurred over the possible that does not yet exist: Is it a thing (*shayy*) or not? In fact, the non-existent is not a thing in reality. But Allah knows what will exist before it exists, and He records it. He may mention and tell others about it, as in the verse, "The convulsion of the last hour is a great thing" [22:1]. It is thus a "thing" with respect to knowledge, mentioning and recording. But it does not actually exist out there in reality. Or as Allah said, "Truly, when He intends a thing, His command is: 'Be,' and it is" [36:82], and "I did indeed create you before, when you had been nothing" [19:9]. That is, man was nothing out there in reality, although he was something in Allah's knowledge. He also said, "Has there not been over man a long period of time when he was nothing (to be) mentioned?" [76:1]

The words, "There is nothing like Him," refute the thesis of the anthropomorphists (*mushābbih*ah), and the words, "He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing," refute the thesis of the negators of divine attributes (*al-mu'attilah*). The truth is that Allah has all the attributes of perfection, and there is nothing like Him in these attributes. As for the created, although they have the attributes of hearing and seeing, their hearing and seeing is not like the hearing and seeing of the Lord. It is not necessary that affirming attributes also affirm resemblance and similarity. The attributes of a created one are those befitting him, and the attributes of the Creator are those befitting Him.

We do not deny, concerning Allah, what He has given of attributes of Himself or what the one who knows His Lord best (Prophet Muḥammad) has affirmed of Him. He knew what should be ascribed to Him and what should not. He was eager to convey what he knew to his people. Also, He had the most eloquent language and was most able to convey what he intended. If you deny any of those statements, you have disbelieved in what was revealed to Muḥammad (peace be on him).

When you describe Allah in terms in which He has described Himself, do not liken Him to His creatures, because nothing is like Him. If you liken Him to His creatures, you deny Him. Al-Bukhārī's teacher, Nu'aym Ibn Ḥamad Al-Khuzā'ī said, "Whoever

likens Allah to His creatures commits infidelity. And whoever denies what Allah has ascribed to Himself also commits infidelity. There is no anthropomorphism in what Allah has said of Himself or in what His Prophet (peace be on him) has said of Him." We will return to this topic when commenting on the author's words, "One who does not avoid negation as well as anthropomorphism goes astray and does not properly glorify Allah."

Allah has said about Himself that to Him belongs the highest similitude. He has said, "To those who believe not in the Hereafter, applies the similitude of evil; to Allah applies the highest similitude" [16:60]; and, "To Him belongs the loftiest similitude in the heavens and the earth: for He is Exalted in Might, Full of Wisdom" [30:27]. Thus, Allah has applied the evil similitude to the polytheists and their idols, which implies shortcomings, defect and imperfection. He has reserved the highest similitude, which involves all excellences, for Himself. Those who deny the attributes of perfection for Allah actually apply to Him an evil similitude. They destroy His lofty similitude and sublime image which encompass all positive attributes and noble qualities.

Since Allah is qualified with the most perfect attributes, He has the highest similitude and He is more deserving of it than anyone else. It is impossible for there to be two beings that have the highest similitude, for if they were equal in all respects, neither one would be higher and loftier than the other. And if they are not equal, then the highest similitude will only apply to one of them. Hence it is impossible for the One to Whom applies the highest similitude to have an equal or anyone similar to Him.[49]

The scholars of Qur'ānic exegesis differ about the connotation of the "highest similitude". One who has been guided by Allah has been able to reconcile their statements. Some say that the highest similitude encompasses four concepts: (1) the highest, loftiest attributes; (2) informing the creation about them; (3) knowing its existence, informing about it, and mentioning it, and (4) the worship of the Lord by means of the knowledge and cognizance that is in the hearts of those who worship and remember him.

Therefore, there are four matters. First is affirmation of the highest attributes of Allah, regardless of whether the servant actually knows those attributes or not. This is the meaning for those who interpret the phrase as referring to attributes.

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[49]Ibn Al-Qayyīm has discussed this point at length in *Mukhtaṣar aṣ-Ṣawā'iq al-Murṣalah*, vol. 1, pp. 213f.

Second is its existence in one's knowledge and perceptions. This is the meaning of both the early and later scholars' statement that is what is in the hearts of His servants, covering aspects of knowledge, remembrance, love, honor, respect, fear, hope, trust and turning to Him. That that is in the heart is the greatest similitude that no one else could possibly share in. It is something special in their hearts as it is something particular to His being. This is the meaning given by those commentators who say that it refers to the inhabitants of the heavens glorifying, loving and worshiping Him, as well as those who inhabit the earth, regardless of those who ascribe partners to Him, disobey Him or deny His attributes. The inhabitants of the earth glorify Him, extol Him and humble themselves to His greatness, submitting to His power and greatness. Allah says, "Unto Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and in the earth. All are obedient unto Him" [30:26].

Third is to mention His attributes, inform others about them and glorify them by denying any kind of weakness, deficiency or similarity for them.

Fourth refers to loving the One Who has those attributes, affirming His oneness, having sincerity to Him, having trust in Him, and turning to Him. Whenever belief in the attributes is more complete and perfect, love and sincerity for Him is stronger. The statements of the Elders all revolve around the above four meanings.

No one goes further astray than the one who puts verse 27 of Sūrat Ar-Rūm and verse 11 of Sūrat Ash-Shūrā in contention with one another. They use the verse from Ash-Shūrā to deny Allah's attributes and they are blind to the remainder of the verse, which says, "And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing." This misguidance even led one of them, Aḥmad Ibn Abī Duwad Al-Qāḍī, to advise the Caliph Al-Mā'mūn to write on the covering of the Ka'bah, "There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Strong, the Wise," attempting to distort the words of Allah in order to deny Allah's attributes of Seeing and Hearing. Similarly, another misled person, Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān, said, "I wish I could erase from the Qur'ān, 'Then He settled over the Throne' [7:54]." We ask Allah, the Great, the Hearing, the Seeing, to confirm us with the confirmed saying (the testimony of faith) in both this life and the Hereafter by His grace and mercy.

Concerning the grammatical parsing of ka-mithlihī, there are different views. First, the ka is considered a non-restrictive relative clause added for emphasis. 'Aws Ibn Hajr has said:

There is no one like (*ka-mithl*) the young Zuhayr,
no one equivalent to him in behavior.

Another said:

There exists no man of men similar to him (*ka-mithlihim*).

A third said:

Dead bodies like the (*ka-mithl*) trunk of the palm tree.

Therefore, mithl is the predicate of *laysa* and its simple substantive is *shayy*. This is a strong, good opinion. The Arabs know this meaning in their dialects. It would not be obscure to them when they hear it. An additional ka for emphasis can be found in Arabic in the following statements, "What was left are the three stones under the cooking pot, as they were (*ka-kama*) put," and, "It became like the remains of eaten-up crops."

A second view is that *mithl* (like) is extraneous. That is, the meaning is *laysa ka-huwa shayy* ('there is nothing like him'). This is far from the correct view. *Mithl* is a noun and the opinion that states that an additional letter has been added for emphasis is much more likely the opinion that states that an additional complete word has been added extraneously.

The third view is that there is nothing augmentative in the statement. It is similar to the statement, "Someone like you does not do that," which means: 'You don't do such a thing.' The word similar is used as exaggeration. That is, "If there were any kind of similitude to Allah, it would not be similar to Him. So what about the case when there is no such similitude?"

Other opinions are given but the first view seems the most apparent.

(18) He created (*khalaqa*) the creation (*khālq*) with His Knowledge (*bi-'ilmihi*).

Khalaqa means to initiate, originate, and bring into existence. It also means to determine and ordain (*qadara*). *Khalq* is the infinitive verbal noun, but here it means *makhlūq*, 'the created'. The word *bi-'ilmihi* functions as a *hal*, denotative of state, suggesting that Allah created the world with full knowledge. He has said, "Should He not know what He created, whereas He is the Most Subtle and Most Aware?" [67:14]. And He has elaborated, "With Him are the keys to the Unseen, the treasures that none knows but He. He knows whatever there is on earth and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but with His knowledge. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry but is noted in a Clear Record. It is He Who takes your souls by night and knows all that you do by day" [6:59-60]. That verse contains a refutation of the Mu'tazilah.

Imām 'Abdul-'Azīz Al-Makkī, a student and friend of Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī, in his book *Al-Hidah*,[50] gave an account of a discussion he had with Bishr Al-Marisī at the court of Al-Mā'mūn. He questioned Bishr about the knowledge of Allah. Bishr replied, "He is not ignorant." 'Abdul-'Azīz kept on repeating the question to him and he kept coming back with the same answer. He would not admit that Allah knows by His knowledge. 'Abdul-'Azīz then said, "Denying His ignorance is not an act of praise. If I say, 'This pillar is not ignorant, it does not mean that it knows. Furthermore, Allah has praised the prophets, angels and Believers because of their knowledge, not because they were not ignorant. If knowledge is confirmed, then ignorance is negated. But negating ignorance does not affirm knowledge. And human beings must affirm of Allah what He has affirmed of Himself and negate what He has negated. And furthermore, we must be quiet about what He has kept quiet about."

The rational arguments proving that Allah is qualified with the attribute of knowledge are as follows. First, it is not possible for Allah to create things without knowing what they are. Creating something means to bring that thing into existence by His will. Willing implies that He conceptualizes what He wills. The conception of what He wills is the knowledge of the willed thing. Therefore, creation necessarily implies knowledge. Second, the perfection and order that we see in the things of the world requires that the One Who made them should know them thoroughly. A perfect work cannot be expected of an ignorant being.

Third, among the beings of the world are those who have knowledge. And since knowledge is an attribute of perfection, it is inconceivable that their Creator should be without knowledge.

This argument may be elaborated in two ways. First, it is self-evident that the Creator is more complete and perfect than the creation, as the Necessary Being is more perfect than the possible. It is also self-evident that, of two beings, one knowing and the other not knowing, what is knowing is more perfect than what is not knowing. Hence, if the Creator is not knowing, the possible being would be more perfect than He, and this is an impossibility. Second, whatever knowledge there is in the possible realm, which are the created things, is from Him. Therefore, it is inconceivable that the Creator and the Originator of perfection should not be perfect. On the contrary, He should be more perfect than the created objects. Again, to Allah belongs the highest similitude. He and His creatures are not equal, neither with respect to analogy or syllogistic

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[50] According to most scholars, it is not correct to attribute this book to Al-Makkī.

reasoning. Rather, every perfection that is affirmed of the created is more substantiated of the Creator. Finally, every shortcoming that the created are possibly free of, He is, in the first place, also free of it.

(19) He has ordained all things in due measure.

Allah has said, "It is He Who created all things, and ordained them in due proportions" [25:2]; "Truly, all things have We created in proportion and measure" [54:49); "And the command of Allah is ordained according to a measure" [33:38]; and, "(He is the One) Who has created and further given order and proportion, Who has ordained laws and granted guidance" [87:2-3].

Muslim recorded from 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah ordained the measures of created things fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth, and His throne was on the waters."[51]

(20) He has fixed their terms.

That is, Allah has fixed the life-span of the creatures such that when their time comes due, they are not able to postpone or advance it a single moment. Allah says, "When their term is reached, not an hour can they cause delay nor an hour can they advance it" [10:49]. Also, "Nor can a soul die except by Allah's leave, the term being fixed as by writing" [3:145]. Muslim recorded from 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd that Umm Ḥabībah, a wife of the Prophet (peace be on him), once said in a prayer, "O Allah, benefit me by my husband, the Messenger of Allah, by my father, Abū Sufyān, and by my brother, Mu'āwīyah." The Prophet (peace be on him) then said, "You have asked of Allah about durations of life already set, and length of days already allotted, and sustenance, the shares of which have been fixed. Allah would not do anything before its due time, and He would not delay anything beyond its due time. If you had asked Allah to provide you refuge from the torment of the Hell-fire or from the torment of the grave, it would have been better for you and more excellent."[52]

One who is killed dies, too, at his appointed time. Allah knows things and fixes them. He determines that one man will die of illness, another will be killed, a third will be buried under a falling

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[51]Muslim, *Al-Qadr*, 2653; At-Tirmidhī, 2156; Aḥmad, 2:169.

[52]Muslim, *Al-Qadr*, 2663, 32, 33; Aḥmad, 1:390, 413, 433, 445, 446.

wall, a fourth will be burned, a fifth drowned, and so on, concerning all causes of death. Allah created death and life. He also created the causes of death and life.

According to the Mu'tazilah, the murdered has had his life-span shortened. If he had not been killed, he would have lived to his complete term; therefore, he actually has two terms. But this is wrong. It is not conceivable to say of Allah that He created a term for him that He knew he would not reach. Nor can one say that He would make his term open to two cases, in the same manner that Allah has commanded the guardian of a person who is murdered to observe equality in avenging the murder or for the killer to pay a ransom (if the guardian agreed) because he has committed what Allah has prohibited and has used means which are forbidden.

In this meaning is the *ḥadīth*, "Keeping the ties of kin extends one's life-span."[53] That is, it is the cause of his prolonged life. Allah has decreed that a specific person will do good to his kin, and because of it he will live longer than he would have lived if he had not done so. Allah has decreed that cause and fulfilled it. Similarly, He has decreed that another person will not keep the ties of kin; therefore, he will live to a specific span because of that. The same kind of argument holds true for murder, death, and so on.

One may ask if good behavior towards one kin enhances the span of life, then does supplication (*du'ā'*) have the same effect? The answer is that there is no necessary relation between the two. This response is based on the above statement of the Prophet (peace be on him) to Umm Ḥabībah, "You have asked of Allah about durations of life which have already been set." One's life-span is determined and it is not confirmed in any text of the Shari'ah that supplication can make any change in that. This is different from the case of being saved from punishment in the Hereafter. It is clear from the texts that supplications can have a positive effect on that matter. However, prayer for change in the term when it promotes the good of the Hereafter has also been allowed.

An-Nasā'ī recorded from 'Ammar Ibn Yāsir that the Prophet (peace be on him) said in an invocation, "O Allah, by Your knowledge of the Unseen and Your Power over the creation, give

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[53]Ash-Shihāb Al-Quda'ī, *Musnad*, ed. by Ḥamadī 'Abdul-Mājid As-Salafī (Beirut: Mu'assasat ar-*Risālah*, 1405/1985), *ḥadīth* no. 100. The *ḥadīth* with this wording is rated weak because one of its transmitters, Naṣr Ibn Ḥammad, is very unreliable. However, the meaning of the *ḥadīth* is supported by a number of other *aḥādīth* reported in various collections. See Al-Bukhārī, 2067, 5986; Muslim, 2557; Abū Dāwūd, 1693; At-Tirmidhī, 1979; Aḥmad, 3:156, 247, 266.

me life as long as life is good for me and cause me to die when death is best for me..."[54] This is further supported by a *ḥadīth* recorded by Al-Ḥākim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*[55] from Thawban, who narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Nothing can repulse predestination except supplication. Also, nothing increases one's lifespan except piety, and a man is deprived of his sustenance because of the sins he committed."[56] Making a *nadhar* (oath that one would make an offering if something is granted to him) is discouraged in *ḥadīth* because it neither wards off evil nor brings blessings. It is confirmed in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim that the Prophet (peace be on him) forbade nadhar and said, "It does not do any good except to take money from the pocket of a miser."[57]

Supplication is correct and beneficial in some cases but not in all cases. The same is true for *nadhar*. For that reason, Allah does not love transgression in supplications. Imām Aḥmad disapproved of praying for a long life and he said, "That is a *fait accompli* that has already been decided."

As for the statement of Allah, "And no one grows old who grows old nor is aught lessened of his life, but it is recorded in a Book" [35:11]. There is a difference of opinion concerning what the male indefinite pronoun in *'umrihi* is referring to. Some say it is analogous to the statement, "I have a dollar and half of it," meaning, "I have a dollar and a half of another." In this reading, the verse would be, "Nor is a man grown old granted length of days, nor is a part cut off from another's life (*'umrihi*), but it is in a Book ordained."

Others say that refers to addition or deletion in the scrolls that are in the possession of the angels. These people interpret the verses, "For each period is an appointed writing. Allah does blot out or confirm what He pleases. With Him is the Mother of the Book" [13:38-39], as referring to Allah blotting out or confirming what is recorded in the scrolls in the possession of the angels. And, "With Him is the Mother of the Book" refers to the Preserved Tablet (*al-*

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[54]Part of a *ḥadīth* in An-Nasā'ī, 3:54, 55. It was stated earlier.

[55]The name of his work is *Al-Mustadrak 'alā aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*ayn and most scholars of *ḥadīth* do not refer to it as a *Ṣaḥīḥ* because it contains many weak and fabricated *aḥādīth*.

[56]Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 4022; Aḥmad, 5:277, 280, 282; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:493. The first two clauses of this *ḥadīth* are considered correct due to supporting evidence for them. The last clause of the *ḥadīth* has not been transmitted through acceptable chains.

[57]Al-Bukhārī, 6668, 6692, 6693; Muslim, 1639; Abū Dāwūd, 3287; An-Nasā'ī, *An-Nahī 'an an-Nadhar*, 7:15-16; Aḥmad, 2:61, 86.

Lūḥ al-Maḥfuḍ). The context of the verse points to this interpretation. The context is, "For each period is an appointed writing," and then Allah says, "Allah does blot out or confirm what He pleases," that is, from that writing, "And with Him is the Mother of the Book," that is, its source, which is the Preserved Tablet.

Others say that this verse means that Allah erases and abrogates what He wishes of His laws and He affirms whichever of them He wishes. The context points more to this interpretation. Allah says (before the above-quoted part), "And it was never the part of a messenger to bring a sign except as Allah permitted. For each period there is an appointed writing." This means that the Messenger does not produce a sign from himself but it is only from Allah. And then Allah says, "For each period is an appointed writing. Allah does blot out or confirm what He pleases. With Him is the Mother of the Book." That is, every divinely revealed code of law (*shari'ah*) has its appointed time and limit. Then Allah abrogates that legislation with another legislation. Allah abrogates what He wills of those laws when its time ends and He confirms whatever of those laws He so desires.

There are also other interpretations given for this verse. Allah knows best what is correct.

(21) Nothing about them was hidden from Him before He created them. And He knew everything they would do before He created them.

Allah knows what has happened, what will happen, what did not happen and, even were it to happen, (He knows) how it would happen. As Allah says in the Qur'ān, "If they were returned (to this world), they would certainly commit again what they have been forbidden" [6:28]. He knows that they will not be returned, but He states that if they were to be returned, they would return to their old misdeeds. Allah also says, "If Allah found in them any good, He would have indeed made them listen (to the Guidance). As it is, if He had made them listen, they would have turned back and declined (faith)" [8:23]. This is a refutation of the Rafiḍah and Qadarīyyah, who say that Allah does not know something until He creates it and brings it into existence. This is related to the question of predestination (*qadr*) and, God willing, we will discuss it in greater detail later.

(22) He has commanded them to obey Him and He has forbidden them to disobey Him.

After mentioning creation and predestination, the author mentions command and prohibition, alluding to Allah's creating of the creation for the purpose of His worship. As Allah says, "I have not created the jinns and mankind except that they should serve and worship Me" [51:56]. He also said, "He created death and life that He might try which of you is the best in deeds" [67:2].

(23) Things occur as He ordains and wills them. His will is always carried out. There is no will for His servants except for what He wills for them. Whatever He wills for them happens and what He does not will for them does not happen.

Allah has stated, "You do not will except as Allah wills; for Allah is Knowing, Wise" [76:30]; "And you will not will except as Allah wills – the Lord of the Worlds" [81:29]; "Even if We did send angels unto them, and the dead would speak to them, and We gathered together all things before their very eyes, they are not the ones to believe, unless it is in Allah's plan" [6:111]. He has also said, "If your Lord had so willed, they would not have done it" [6:112], and "If it had been the will of your Lord, they would have all believed, all who are on the earth" [10:99]. He has also said, "Those whom Allah wills to guide, He opens their breasts to Islam; (but) those whom He wills to leave astray, He makes their breast close and constricted as if they had to climb up to the skies" [6:125].

And when quoting Noah's statement to his people, Allah says, "Of no profit will be my counsel to you, much as I desire to give you good counsel, if it be that Allah wills to leave you astray" [11:34]; and, "Whom Allah wills He leaves to wander; whom He wills, He places on the way that is straight" [6:39]. These and many other similar verses prove that what Allah wills happens and what He does not will does not happen. How can something happen in His kingdom that He does not will? No belief is further astray than the belief that Allah wills a non-believer to believe, but he does not believe and his will prevails over the will of Allah. Far exalted is Allah above what these people allege.

One may object to our view and say that it is contradicted by the following verses, "Those who ascribe partners (to Allah) will say: 'If Allah had willed, we would not have ascribed partners to Him, nor would our fathers'" [6:148]; "The worshipers of false gods say: 'If Allah had so willed, we would not have worshiped anything but

Him, neither we nor our fathers'" [16:35); and, "They say: 'If it had been the will of Allah, Most Gracious, we would not have worshiped such (deities).' Of that they have no knowledge. They do nothing but lie" [43:20]. But Allah is condemning them for their ascribing their polytheism to the will of Allah. Similarly, He censured Iblīs for ascribing to Allah his misguidance, when he said, "'My Lord, because you have put me in the wrong, I will make wrong seem right to them on the earth'" [15:39].

This objection has been answered in many ways, the best of which are the following. Allah condemned them because they thought that His creative will (*mashi'ah*) implies His pleasure and love for the act. They were actually saying, "If He disliked that act and was angered by it, why did He will it?" So they take His creative will as evidence for His approval. Allah refutes them on this point. Or He is censuring their belief that Allah's creative will is evidence that He commanded the act. Or Allah is rebuking them for rejecting His Shari'ah and His commands with which He sent His messengers and concerning which He revealed His books by His command and decree. Instead of obeying those commands, they refer to Allah's general will. Instead of them mentioning that from the point of view of *tawḥīd*, they mention it to oppose His commands and laws. This is what the *zanadiqah* and ignorant folk do. When they are commanded to do or not to do something, they excuse themselves on the plea of predestination. At the time of 'Umar, a thief similarly justified his theft on the grounds of predestination. 'Umar chastised him and retorted, "I also amputate your hands on the will and decree of Allah." The verse, "Thus did those before them make charges of falsehood" [6:148], supports this view. It exposes such people and says that their intention is only to evade the command of Allah. One may ask how they know that Allah did not ordain it. Did they peek into the Unseen?

Some people argue from the *ḥadīth* which mentions that Moses charged Adam with bringing mankind out of Paradise, and Adam rebutted the charge by saying, "Do you blame me for a thing Allah had ordained for me forty years before I was created?" After relating their discussion, the Prophet (peace be on him) commented that Adam defeated Moses in the argument.[58] This *ḥadīth* is authentic; therefore, we accept and submit to it. We do not try to find fault with its transmitters or question its wording, as do the Qadarīyyah. Nor do we try to explain it away. The correct understanding of the

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[58]Al-Bukhārī, 3409, 4736, 4738, 6614, 7515; Muslim, 2652; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4701; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Qadr*, 2135; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 80.

ḥadīth, though, is not that Adam excused his sin on the grounds of predestination (*qadr*). He knew his Lord and his sin too well to offer that excuse. How can one expect such a thing from a prophet which one cannot expect from an ordinary Believer? Similarly, Moses knew his father (Adam) and his sin better than to blame Adam for a sin that he had repented of and that Allah had forgiven him, and he had been chosen and guided. The thing for which Moses blamed Adam was the affliction that mankind faced in being removed from Paradise. Adam countered this charge by saying that the affliction had already been ordained. Thus, he argued according to predestination, not concerning the sin he committed, but concerning the affliction that was the result of the sin. One can refer to predestination concerning calamities and afflictions but not concerning sins.

That is the best interpretation given for that *ḥadīth*. What is determined of calamities and afflictions must be submitted to and accepted. This is part of the complete pleasure with Allah as Lord. As for sins, one should not commit them. But if one does commit sins, he must ask for forgiveness and repent. Therefore, one repents of sins and patiently bears afflictions. Allah says, "Bear patiently, for the promise of Allah is true; and ask forgiveness for your sin" [40:55]; and, "If you are patient and fear Allah, their plotting will not harm you in the least" [3:120].

As for the statement of Iblīs, "'Lord, because you have led me astray...,'" Allah has condemned Him for justifying his act on the basis of predestination. But he is not being blamed for his recognition that what he did was preordained. Look at what Noah (peace be on him) said, "Of no profit will be my counsel to you, much as I desire to give you counsel, if it be that Allah wills to leave you astray. He is your Lord, and to Him will you return" [11:34]. And how beautiful are these lines of a poet:

> What You will happens,
> even though I may not will it,
> and what I will does not happen
> if You do not will it.

Wahb Ibn Munabbiḥ said, "I contemplated *qadr* and became confused and lost. Again I contemplated *qadr* and became confused and lost. Then I discovered that the people who understand *qadr* best are those who do not discuss it; and the people most ignorant of *qadr* are those who talk about it."

(24) He gives guidance to whomever He wills, protects them and keeps them safe from harm as an act of grace. And He leads astray whomever He wills, abases them and afflicts them out of His justice.

This is a refutation of the Mu'tazilī view that it is incumbent upon Allah to do what is best for human beings. This topic is part of a larger question on divine guidance and abandonment.

The Mu'tazilah say, "Guidance from Allah is simply showing the straight path. Misguidance (being led astray) means the He pronounces that someone has strayed, or His judgment that someone has strayed, when the servant himself creates an act of misguidance." This is all based on their wrong principle that human beings create their own actions.

The evidence for what the author has said includes Allah's statement, "You cannot guide whom you like; it is Allah Who guides whom He wills" [28:56]. If guidance were simply to show the straight path, then how can that type of guidance be denied of the Prophet (peace be on him)? He does show the straight path to everyone, whether they accept it or reject it. And Allah says, "Had We willed, We would have given everyone his guidance" [32:13], and "He leaves astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills" [74:31]. If guidance from Allah were simply defining what is true, it has been done for everyone, so how can it can it be qualified in these verses by His will to do so? Allah also says, "Had it not been for the grace of My Lord, I should have certainly have been among those brought there (to Hell)" [37:57]. And finally, "Whom Allah wills, He leaves to stray; whom He wills, He places on the Way that is straight" [6:39].

(25) All of them are subject to His will, between either His grace or His justice.

This is true because they are as Allah has said of them, "It is He Who has created you; and of you are some that are unbelievers and some that are Believers" [64:2]. Hence, when He guides someone to faith, it is an act of grace from Him and to Him belongs the praise for that act. But when He leaves another to wander, it is His justice and He is also deserving of praise for that.

We will discuss this topic in more detail later, God willing. This is because the author did not put all of his statements concerning *qadr* in one place. Therefore, we will follow his order.

(26) He is exalted above having opponents (*aḍad*) or equals (*andad*).

Ḍidd means 'opposite' or 'opponent'; *nidd* means 'equal'. Allah has no one to oppose Him; what He wills happens; what He does not will does not happen; and there is none equal to or like Him. As Allah has said, "There is none like unto Him" [112:4]. By denying that Allah has an opponent or an equal, the author seems to be censuring the Mu'tazilī view that man is the creator of his acts.

(27) His decision is never reversed; His command is never resisted; His will is never frustrated.

That is to say, there is no one Who can force Him to change His decision, delay its implementation, or frustrate its execution. He is the One God, the Supreme, the Irresistible.

(28) We believe in all of these things, and We are certain that everything comes from Him.

Concerning *īmān* (faith), God willing, it will be discussed later. As for *al-iqan*, it means *istiqrār* - 'to settle'. For example, water *yaqina* in the tank, that is, water settles in the tank. As for the *tanwīn* in *kullan*, it stands for the construct state, so it refers to everything that happens. The sentence, therefore, means that we have a firm and unshakable conviction that everything that happens is from Allah. Everything is determined and ordained by Him. Everything is created and brought into being by His will. We will return to this point later, God willing.

(29) (And we believe and are certain) that Muḥammad is His chosen Servant (*'abd*), His elect Prophet (*nabī*) and His Messenger (*rasūl*), with whom He is well-pleased.

The words used by Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī for "chosen", "elect" and "well-pleased" are very similar in meaning.

Note that the completeness of human beings lies in the actualization of the true worship of Allah. Whenever the human being increases his actualization of that worship, he becomes more complete and he ascends in degree. Anyone who thinks that human beings may transcend the limits of worship, in any manner whatsoever, and that this transcendence means greater perfection, is a most ignorant and deviant person. Allah has said, "They say that

the Most Gracious has begotten offspring – exalted is He above that. They are but servants raised in honor" [21:26]. There are other similar verses in the Qur'ān. Allah describes His Prophet (peace be on him) as 'abd (servant) when mentioning his greatest event. While discussing the Prophet's ascension to heaven, He says, "Glory be to Allah, Who took His servant (*'abd*) for a journey by night" [17:1]. (He has referred to the Prophet in this manner in several other verses. For example,) He has said, "Yet when the servant of Allah stands forth to invoke Him" [72:19]; "He (Allah) conveyed the inspiration to His servant what He meant to convey" [53:10]; and, "If you are in doubt as to what We have revealed to Our servant..." [2:23]. It is because of (his excellent servitude to Allah) that he excelled everyone in this world and will surpass everyone in the next. That is why Jesus will say on the Day of Judgment, when the people come to him seeking his intercession on their behalf, "Go to Muḥammad; he is the servant (*'abd*) who has had all of his early and later faults forgiven."[59] He attained that great status through his complete servitude of Allah.

The author has used a *kasrah* in the statement "*inna Muḥammadan*," in conjunction with the words, "*inna Allaha wāḥidun....*" It has to be in this manner because they are ruled by the governing words, "And we say (*naqul*) about Allah's oneness..."[60]

The well known approach of the theologians to prophethood is through demonstration of miracles. Many of them do not recognize the prophethood of prophets except through miracles, and they confirm them in strange ways. Many of them require the rejection of supernatural events coming through anyone except prophets. They even deny the wondrous acts that occur to the pious devotees of Allah, the existence of magic, and so on.

There is no doubt that miracles constitute authentic evidence, but miracles are not the only kind of evidence. Prophethood is claimed either by the most honest person or the most dishonest person. It is not difficult for anyone except the most ignorant to ascertain which is which. The situation and circumstances around them reveal who is who. There are many ways to distinguish between the truthful and the liars for people other than prophets; therefore, what about the case of those who claim to be prophets? (There must also be many

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[59]Part of the *ḥadīth* on intercession reported by Anas Ibn Mālik and recorded in Al-Bukhārī, 4476, 6365, 7410, 7516; Muslim, 193, 322; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4312; Aḥmad, 3:116, 244, 247, 248.

[60]This is a grammatical point that need not concern the English reader.

ways to determine if they are truthful.) As Ḥassan said about the Prophet (peace be on him), "Had there been no other distinguishing signs in him, his face would have been sufficient to tell you about him."

Whenever an imposter has claimed prophecy, his ignorance, lies, wickedness and servility to Satan have been exhibited to everyone who has the least bit of discernment. A messenger must tell people things, command them to do specific things and perform specific acts, all of which demonstrate his sincerity and truthfulness. As for the imposter, the things he expounds, the rules he prescribes and the deeds that he performs all contain things that expose his falsehood in different ways. One is the opposite of the other. For every two people who claim the same thing, one will be truthful and the other a liar. It is inevitable that the veracity of the one and the falsehood of the other become clear to the people, even if only after some time. Truth leads to goodness and untruth must lead to evil.

In the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Be truthful, for truth leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise. One keeps on being truthful until Allah records him among the truthful. Refrain from lying, for lying leads to wickedness and wickedness leads to Hell. One goes on lying until his name is recorded among the liars."[61] This is why Allah has said, "Shall I inform you on whom the evil ones descend? They descend on every lying, wicked person, and pour hearsay vanities in their ears, and most of them are liars. And the poets! It is those straying in evil who follow them. Do you not see that they wander distracted in every valley? They say what they do not practice?" [26:221-226].

Soothsayers, fortune-tellers and the like, although they sometimes may turn out to be correct concerning something they said about the Unseen, have enough lies and evil deeds that it becomes clear that the source of their narrations is not an angel and that they are not prophets. When the Prophet (peace be on him) asked Ibn Sayyad to inform him what the Prophet had kept hidden from him, he said, "Smoke." Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Down with you. You cannot be more than what you are,"[62] meaning: 'you are nothing but a soothsayer.' And he said to the Prophet, "They (his visiting spirits) sometimes bring him the truth

[61]Muslim, *Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 2607; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 4989; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1962; Aḥmad, 1:384, 393.

[62]Al-Bukhārī, 1354, 3055, 6123, 6618; Muslim, *Al-Fitan wa Ashrat as-Sa'ah*, 2930; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Malaḥim*, 4329; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Fitan*, 2250; Aḥmad, 2:148, 149.

and sometimes falsehood."[63] He also said, "I see a throne on the water."[64] And that was the throne of Satan. The Qur'ān makes it clear that poets are only followed by those who wander astray, indulging in their evil desires, even if it ruins their lives in the end. One who recognizes the Prophet, his truthfulness, his keeping of his word, his doing what he says, will be convinced that he was neither a poet nor a soothsayer.

People have different ways of discriminating between a truthful person and a liar. They use such means even for common people like farmers, weavers, writers, grammarians, doctors, jurists, and so on. (Similarly, there are ways to determine the veracity of a prophet.) Prophecy encompasses concepts and precepts which are the noblest of all truths and principles of conduct known to man. It is necessary that the prophet set an example in everything. If this is true, it is not difficult to ascertain who is a true prophet and who is not.

The profound scholars state that if something is reported by one, two or three persons, that is circumstantial evidence that leads the report to be considered true by necessity. In the same way, one person's pleasure with another, or his love or hate, pleasure or displeasure, may be noted from the expression on his face, even if he is not able to convey it in words. Allah has said, "Had We so willed, We could have shown them to you, and you would have known them by their marks" [47:30]. Then Allah continues, "But surely you will know them by the tone of their speech" [47:30]. And there is a saying which goes, "When you conceal something in your heart, Allah reveals it through your face and the slip of your tongue."

Just as one discovers a truthful report from a deceitful report through circumstantial evidence, what about the case of one who claims to be a prophet? How can the truthfulness of such be hidden from his lies? How can it be that it is possible to distinguish between the truthful claimant to prophecy from the lying claimant through different evidence?

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[63] Al-Bukhārī, 6273; Muslim, *Al-Fitan*, 2930.

[64] Part of a *ḥadīth* in Muslim, *Al-Fitan*, 2925, narrated by Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī. The *ḥadīth* states, "Once the Prophet, Abū Bakr and 'Umar met Abū 'Ayyād. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, 'Will you bear witness that I am the Messenger of Allah? He said, 'Will you bear witness that I am the messenger of Allah? The Prophet (peace be on him) said, 'I believe in Allah, His angels, and His books.' Then he asked him, 'What do you see?' He said, 'I see a throne on the waters.' The Prophet (peace be on him) then said, 'You rāther see the throne of Iblīs on the waters...'" Also, see At-Tirmidhī, 2248.

Khadījah, may Allah be pleased with her, knew that her husband was honest and truthful. Therefore, when he received his first revelation and he told her, "I fear for my life," she said to him, "Fear not. I swear by Allah, that Allah will never disgrace you. You keep the ties of kinship, speak the truth, help the needy, honor the guest, give to the poor and assist those in difficulty."[65] Obviously, the Prophet (peace be on him) was not fearful because he told lies; he knew about himself that he did not lie. He feared, though, that some evil might befall him. That is the second stage. Khadījah told him what negated such a fear by reminding him of his virtues and noble qualities. She knew that it is Allah's way not to disgrace people of that nature.

Similarly, when the Negus, the emperor of Abyssinia, enquired about the teachings of the Prophet and the Muslim refugees from Makkah recited a portion of the Qur'ān to him, he told them, "This and what Moses brought are two rays that shine from the same source of light."[66]

When Khadījah took the Prophet (peace be on him) to her cousin Waraqah Ibn Nawfal, who was a Christian and who used to write the Gospel in Arabic, and asked him to listen to what had happened to the Prophet (peace be on him), he responded, "This is the angel (*an-namūs*) who used to visit Moses."[67]

When Heraclius, the king of the Byzantines, received the letter from the Prophet (peace be on him) inviting him to Islam, he inquired whether there were any Arabs in the city at that time. Abū Sufyān and a trade caravan happened to be present. The king called for him and asked Abū Sufyān about the Prophet (peace be on him). He commanded the other Arabs (who were with Abū Sufyān) to contradict him if he should lie. They ended up endorsing with their silence all that he said. The king asked, "Were any of his forefathers a king?" Abū Sufyān said no. The king asked, "Did anyone else among you make the same statements before him?" Abū Sufyān answered no. He then asked, "Does he come from a noble family?" "Yes," was Abū Sufyān's answer.

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[65]Part of a *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Ā'ishah, recorded in Al-Bukhārī, 3, 4935, 6982; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 160; Aḥmad, 6:153, 232.

[66]Part of a long *ḥadīth* narrated by Umm Salamah, recorded in Aḥmad, 1:201-203, 5:290-292; Ibn Hishām, *As-Sīrah an-Nabawīyyah*, 1:334-337. Al-Arnawūṭ says that its chain is strong.

[67]Part of the same *ḥadīth* just mentioned, narrated by 'Ā'ishah and recorded by Al-Bukhārī and others.

Then he asked, "Did you find him telling a lie before he said what he is saying?" He answered, "No, we never experienced him lying." The king then asked, "Are his followers the weak or the nobles?" He was told that the weak were following him. He then asked, "Are they increasing or decreasing in number?" He was told that they were increasing. He then asked, "Did anyone turn from his religion in anger with him after he had entered the religion?" They said no. The king said, "Have you fought him?" They said yes. The king asked about the fighting between them and they told him, "Sometimes they win and sometimes we win." The king asked, "Has he ever betrayed anyone?" They told him that he had not. He then asked, "What does he command?" They said, "He commands us to worship only Allah, not ascribing any partners to Him. And he forbids us what our fathers worshiped. He commands us to pray, speak the truth, practice temperance and be kind to relatives."

Those were more than ten questions. After asking them, the king told them what they demonstrated, "I asked you if any of his forefathers were king and you said no. If you had said that among his forefathers was a king, I would have said that he is a person who is seeking the kingdom of his father. And I asked you if anyone among you had made the same statements he makes. You answered no. I would have told you, if you had said that there was such a person making the same statements, that he is simply following in the footsteps of that person. Then I asked if you had ever known him to lie before he started his claims. You answered in the negative. I concluded that it was not possible for one who did not lie in matters of man to lie while speaking about Allah. I asked you if the weak or the nobles follow him and you told me that the weak follow him. These are the people who follow the messengers," meaning in the beginning of their message.

Then he said, "I asked you if his followers were increasing or decreasing, and you said they are certainly increasing. This is what happens with true faith until it becomes dominant. And I asked you if anyone had turned from his religion in anger with him after he had entered the religion. You said no. That is the case with true faith. When it enters the heart, no one can be displeased with it afterwards." This is one of the greatest signs of truth. On the other hand, deception and falsehood must be exposed in the end. Those who believed in such a false message end up denouncing it. Those who remained away from it at the beginning never enter its fold. Falsehood can prevail for a short time but then it becomes exposed.

Heraclius continued by saying, "I asked you about the fighting between you and him and you said that sometimes you are

victorious and sometimes he. That is the way with messengers. They are tested but the final result is always for them. And I asked you if he had ever betrayed anyone and you said no. That is the way of the messengers; they never betray." He was aware of the ways of the messengers and how Allah dealt with them. He knew that sometimes they are victorious and sometimes they are tested. He knew that they never betray. He knew those were the signs of the messengers and that it was the way of Allah to test the prophets and Believers with both ease and hardship so they could attain gratitude and patience. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I swear by the One in Whose hand is my life, Allah never decrees anything for a Believer except that is good for him. And that is the case for no one else except the Believer. If comfort comes to him he gives thanks and that is good for him. If hardship comes to him he is patient and that is good for him."[68]

Allah has explained in the Qur'ān the wisdom behind the enemy's victory over the Believers at Uḥud. He says, "Lose not heart, nor fall into despair, for you must gain mastery if you are true in faith," [3:139], and "*Alif Lām Mīm*. Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, 'We believe,' and they will not be tested?" [29:1-2]. There are many verses and *aḥādīth* that tell how Allah acts towards His creatures and what wisdom underlies His acts which bedazzle the mind.

Heraclius continued, "I asked you about his teachings and you said that he asked you to worship Allah alone without associating anyone with Him, to offer prayer, abide by truth, practice temperance and do good to kin, and that he forbade you to worship the gods your fathers had been worshiping. This is what the prophets preach. I knew that a prophet was to be born; however, I did not expect that he would be from you. I wish I could accept him. Were I not king, I would go to see him. If what you say is true, he will conquer the ground on which I am standing." Heraclius was addressing Abū Sufyān Ibn Harb, who was at that time a disbeliever and a staunch enemy of the Prophet (peace be on him). Abū Sufyān himself stated, "When we left I told my companions, 'The matter of the son of Abū Kabshah (the Prophet) has become so strong that even the king of the Romans fears it.' Since that time I was certain that the Prophet's religion would dominate until Allah forced me into Islam, even though I disliked it."[69]

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[68]Muslim, *Az-Zuhd wa ar-Riqāq*, 2999; Aḥmad, 4:332, 6:16.

[69]Al-Bukhārī, 7, 51, 2681, 2804, 2941, 2978, 3174, 4553, 5980, 6260, 7196,

One must realize that things that happen within the heart are produced by a complexity of causes, none of which can be regarded as sufficient in itself. Satiety, quenching of thirst, gratitude, joy and sorrow, and other similar things are complex experiences which are caused by a combination of factors, though each may have its own effects. Similar is the case with knowledge that is based on reports. One report generates some probability in the heart, a second report strengthens it, and so on until it is transformed into definite knowledge. The same is true of the arguments for the veracity or otherwise of a claimant.

Furthermore, Allah has preserved some vestiges that point to the favors He bestowed on His prophets and Believers, as well as what punishment He meted out to those who denied the messengers. Examples are the relics of the flood of Noah or of the drowning of the Pharaoh and his army. Whenever Allah narrates the stories of the successive prophets in Sūrat Ash-Shu'arā, such as the stories of Moses, Abraham, Noah and others after him, He stated at the end of each story, "Truly in that is a sign, but most men do not believe. And truly, your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful" [26:8-9, 68-69, 103-104, 121-122, 139-140, 158-159, 174-175 and 190-191].

In short, the knowledge that there have been people in the world who claimed that they were messengers of Allah, that a section of people followed them and others rejected them, that Allah helped the prophets and their followers and made them victorious, and that He punished their enemies – all of this is part of the most reliable and most certain part of historical knowledge. This knowledge has been transmitted in a far better and clearer manner than the knowledge concerning the kings of Persia or the scholars of Greece, such as Hippocrates, Galen, Ptolemy, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Today, when we know about the prophets, as well as their followers and enemies, through continuous transmission of reports, we become certain, for various reasons, that they were true prophets. First, they had told their people that Allah would eventually help them and leave their opponents to perish. The final matter would be in their favor. Second, it actually happened that Allah gave them victory and destroyed their enemies. When we also know how such occurred, for example how Pharaoh was drowned, how the people of Noah perished in the deluge and how Allah saved him and his companions, we recognize the truthfulness of the messengers. Third, if one is familiar with what the messengers

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7541; Muslim, *Al-Jihād*, 1773; Aḥmad, 1:262-263.

brought of laws and principles of life, it will be clear to him that they were the most knowledgeable men and that what they said could not have come from an ignorant liar. Furthermore, what they brought of mercy, well-being, guidance, goodness, guiding mankind to what benefits them and keeping them from what harms them is proof that these things came from truly sincere and affectionate well-wishers of mankind who wanted nothing but good and happiness for them.

This is not the place to mention the miracles of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him). One may consult the relevant books on the subject, such as the work of Al-Bayhaqī and others.

To deny the prophethood of Muḥammad (peace be on him) is to challenge the wisdom of Allah and to accuse Him of being unjust and unwise. In fact, it is to deny His Lordship (*rubūbīyyah*). Allah is well exalted above such things.

Here is the explanation of that argument. Suppose Muḥammad were not a prophet, as they say, but simply an unjust ruler who claimed to have been sent by Allah, enjoined some things and forbade others, prescribed new rules and laws and abrogated earlier ones, fought people and killed followers of former prophets, even though they were not wrong, reduced their women to slaves, seized their property, annexed their lands, and went on doing all of this until he dominated the land. And during all of that, he claimed that he was acting on the command of Allah and that Allah was blessing him and was pleased with him. And suppose further that he continued such lies for twenty-three years until Allah gave him victory, helped him by supernatural means, responded to his prayers, destroyed his enemies and gave him fame. If he did all of these things out of evil, as they claim, then he must have been the most wicked of men and the greatest liar ever. He would have also been the destroyer of the prophetic religions and killer of the pious friends of Allah. Despite all that, Allah kept helping him and bestowing on him one success after another. And Allah never thought for a moment to stop or destroy him. If (any people) believe that, they must also believe that there is no Creator, Ruler or Lord of the world, for if there were a Ruler of the world, powerful and wise, He would have certainly stopped him, punished him severely and made him a lesson for people who came afterwards. Nothing short of this would be becoming to any human ruler, not to speak of the Ruler of rulers and Judge of judges.

But, on the contrary, Allah increased his fame, made his religion prevail and made a great many people in all parts of the world believe in his prophecy and witness to his piety. We do not deny that many people have falsely claimed prophecy and enjoyed some success for a time. But their successes were short-lived and their

victories ephemeral. In fact, Allah made His true prophets and their followers triumphant in the end over such liars. He annihilated the latter completely. This is the way of Allah that He has been following forever. Even the disbelievers are aware of this fact. Allah says in the Qur'ān, "Do they say: 'A poet! We wait for him some calamity (hatched) by time.' Say: You wait. I, too, will wait along with you" [52:30-31].

Don't you see that He is stating that His perfection, wisdom and power refuse to allow anyone who forges statements in His name to remain unpunished? Indeed, He will certainly make such a person a lesson for His servants, as His practice with the forgers in the past has shown. He says, "What! Do they say: 'He has forged a falsehood against Allah?' But if Allah willed, He could seal your heart" [42:24]. This ends the reply to the condition and then Allah makes a clear, unconditional statement that He wipes away what is false and establishes what is true. He says, "No just estimate of Allah do they make when they say: 'Allah does not send anything to man (by way of revelation)" [6:91]. Allah has stated that anyone who denies His sending of messengers and revelation does not have the correct image of Allah.

People have distinguished between a prophet (*nabī*) and a messenger (*rasūl*) in different ways. The best view on this question, in my judgment, is that when Allah reveals about the Unseen to a man and asks him to convey that to others, he is a prophet and a messenger. But if He does not ask him to preach it to others, he is a prophet and not a messenger. Hence, a messenger is a special kind of prophet. It follows that every messenger is a prophet but not vice-versa. The office of messenger is higher than the office of prophet which it incorporates. On the other hand, the category of the messengers is a smaller category (in number) than that of the prophets, which includes the former and is wider than it. In short, as a concept, the office of messenger is wider, but as regards the number of its bearers, it is smaller.

The sending of messengers is one of the greatest blessings that Allah has bestowed on mankind. This is especially true in the case of Muḥammad (peace be on him). Allah has said, "Allah did confer a great favor on the Believers when He sent among them a messenger from among themselves, rehearsing unto them the verses of Allah, purifying them, and instructing them in scripture and wisdom. while before that they had been in manifest error" [3:164]; also, "We sent you not but as a mercy for all creatures" [21:107].

(30) And he is the seal of the prophets.

Allah has said, "Rather, he is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets" [33:40]. And the Prophet (peace be on him) himself said, "The similitude of the prophets is that of a palace which is beautiful and perfect except that the place of one brick is vacant. Whoever goes round it is struck by its beauty. However, he wonders why the place of one brick is empty. When I was sent, that empty place was filled and the building became complete. With me the line of the messengers has been sealed" [recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].[70]

He also said, "I have many names. I am Muḥammad. I am Aḥmad. I am Al-Maḥī (the Destroyer), as through me Allah will destroy infidelity. And I am Al-Ḥashīr (the Gatherer), as following me people will be raised from the graves and gathered together. And I am Al-'Aqib (the Last), as there will be no prophet after me."[71]

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* it is recorded from Thawbān that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "Among my nation will arise thirty great liars. Each of them will claim that he is a prophet. However, I am the seal of the prophets and there will be no prophet after me."[72] Muslim has also recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah has exalted me above all the prophets by favoring me with six things that He did not give to any other prophet: He has enabled me to express many things in few words; He has helped me by casting fear into the hearts of our enemies; He has allowed me the spoils of war; He has permitted me to worship anywhere on the earth and has deemed it pure; He has sent me as His messenger to all mankind; and He has sealed the series of prophets with me."[73]

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[70]Actually, the wording of the *ḥadīth* as mentioned by the commentator occurs neither in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Al-Bukhārī or *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Instead it is mentioned by Ibn 'Asakir in *Tārīkh Dimashq* (Madinah: Maktabat ad-Dār, 1407 A.H.) and by As-Suyūṭī in Al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr. However, with a slightly different wording, the *ḥadīth* may be found in Al-Bukhārī, 3535; Muslim, 2286; and Aḥmad, 2:256, 312, 398, 412. All of these *aḥādīth* are narrated by Abū Hurayrah. Similar *aḥādīth* reported by other Companions may be found in Al-Bukhārī, 3534; Muslim, 2297; At-Tirmidhī, 2613; Aḥmad, 3:361 and 5:137.

[71]Al-Bukhārī, 3532, 4896; Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2354; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Adab*, 2842; Ad-Dārimī, 2:317, 318; Aḥmad, 4:81, 84.

[72]This is part of a *ḥadīth* in Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Fitan wa al-Malaḥim*, 4252; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Fitan*, 2220; Aḥmad, 5:278. The commentator stated that it is from *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* but this is not correct. However, there are *aḥādīth* in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* with the same meaning. See Muslim, *Al-Imārah*, 1920 and *Al-Fitan* 2889.

[73]Muslim, 523; At-Tirmidhī, 1553; Aḥmad, 2:411, 412.

(31) He is Leader (imām) of the Pious.

An imām is one whose example is followed. The Prophet (peace be on him) was sent as an example to be followed. As Allah has said, "Say (Muḥammad): If you truly love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you" [3:31]. Whoever follows him and obeys him is one of the pious.

(32) He is Chief of the Messengers.

The Prophet said, "I will be leading the children of Adam on the Day of Resurrection. I will be the first to rise from the grave. I will be the first to intercede and the first whose request will be granted."[74] This *ḥadīth* was recorded by Muslim. The words that occur in the *ḥadīth* concerning intercession are, "I will be the leader of all mankind on the Day of Judgment."[75] Muslim and At-Tirmidhī recorded, on the authority of Wāthilah Ibn Al-Asqa, that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah chose the people of Kinānah from among the children of Ismā'īl, and the Quraysh from among the Kinānah, and Banū Hāshīm from among the Quraysh. And me he chose from Banū Hāshīm."[76]

One might say that this statement is not consistent with the *ḥadīth* recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim in which the Prophet said, "Do not exalt me above Moses. On the Day of Judgment, when everyone will be unconscious, I will be the first to regain consciousness. And lo and behold, Moses will be holding a side of the Throne. I will not know whether he gained consciousness before me or was exempted by Allah from falling unconscious."[77] How can one reconcile this *ḥadīth* with the *ḥadīth* that states, "I am the leader of all the children of Adam. However, this is not boasting."[78]

The response to this is that the Prophet (peace be on him) made the former statement for a particular reason. A Jew once said to a

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[74]Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2278; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4673; Aḥmad, 2:540.

[75]Part of a long *ḥadīth* on intercession referred to earlier. See Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Anbiyā'*, 3340, 3361; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 194; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2436; Aḥmad, 2:435, 436.

[76]Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2276; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3612; Aḥmad, 4:107.

[77]Al-Bukhārī, 2411, 3408, 6517, 6518, 7428; Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2373; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4671; Aḥmad, 2:264.

[78]At-Tirmidhī, *Az-Zuhd*, 3618; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4308; Aḥmad, 3:2 and 1:281, 282, 295, 296.

Muslim, "No, and I swear by the One Who chose Moses over mankind." The Companion got upset and slapped the Jew, saying, "You dare say that while the Prophet is among us!" The Jew went to the Prophet (peace be on him) and complained about the Muslim who had slapped him. Then the Prophet (peace be on him) made the above statement. In fact, if the Prophet (peace be on him) is exalted out of some sectarian bias or caprice, it is blameworthy. Even *jihād* is ruined if someone fights for the sake of partisanship. Certainly Allah has forbidden boasting. But Allah has also said, "We have exalted some prophets over others" [17:55], and, "These messengers We endowed with gifts some above the others: to one of them Allah spoke, others He raised to degrees of honor" [9:253]. This means that what is blameworthy is to prefer one in the manner of boasting, in the sense of demeaning the others. This is how the *ḥadīth*, "Do not exalt one prophet over another," is to be understood,[79] if that *ḥadīth* is confirmed, as it is mentioned in the same *ḥadīth* as the *ḥadīth* concerning Moses and is contained in Al-Bukhārī and elsewhere. But some say that there is a defect in this *ḥadīth*, as opposed to the *ḥadīth* of Moses, which is authentic, without any defect, according to the consensus.[80]

Some people have given a different reply. They say that the meaning of the *ḥadīth*, "Do not exalt me above Moses," or "Do not exalt one prophet above another," is that one should not exalt one particular prophet over another. However, there is nothing wrong in making a general statement without referring to a particular person, such as, "I am the leader of all the children of Adam. However, it is not boasting." Since the *ḥadīth* refers to the greatness of the Prophet in general terms, there is nothing wrong in it. If you say that X is the best of all the people in the city, you are not comparing him with any particular person and, as such, there is nothing wrong in it. But it is completely different when you say X is better than Y. It is better to avoid such specific references. This is the answer given by Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī in his *Sharḥ Ma'ānī al-Āthār*.[81]

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[79] Al-Bukhārī, 3414; Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2373. With a slightly different wording, the *ḥadīth* is also found in Muslim, 2374; Aḥmad, 3:33; Abū Dāwūd, 6668; and Al-Bukhārī, 4638, 6912, 6917, 7427.

[80] This is a strange statement by the Commentator, as none of the scholars of *ḥadīth*, including Ibn Hajr and others, have pointed out any defect in the *ḥadīth*.

[81] Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Ma'anī al-Āthār*, ed. by Muḥammad Zuhrī An-Najjār (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyyah, 1399/1979), first edition, vol. IV, pp. 316-316.

Concerning what has been recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Do not exalt me over Jonah (Yūnus Ibn Matta)," a Ṣūfī was asked about this *ḥadīth* but said he would not say what it meant until they gave him a large sum of money. When he received the money, he said that the *ḥadīth* meant that Jonah enjoyed the same closeness to Allah in the stomach of the fish as Muḥammad (peace be on him) enjoyed during the night of his ascension. Ṣūfīs extol such kinds of exegesis, but it only proves their ignorance of the prophetic or divine language. The *ḥadīth* stated above does not occur with those words in any of the reliable books of *ḥadīth*. The words that occur in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* are, "No one should say, 'I am better than Yūnus Ibn Matta'."' Another version of the *ḥadīth* states, "Whoever says, 'I am better than Yūnus Ibn Matta', has committed a falsehood."[82] The words in this *ḥadīth* are general. What they mean is that no one should exalt himself over Jonah. But it does not follow that Muslims should not exalt Muḥammad (peace be on him) over Jonah (peace be on him). Allah has said that Jonah was swallowed by a fish because he had done something that did not behoove him. Allah's words are, "And remember the companion of the fish (Dhu an-Nūn), when he departed in wrath, He imagined that We would not punish him. But he cried through the depths of darkness: 'There is no god but You, Glory to You. I was indeed wrong'" [21:87].

Some people have thought that they were better than Jonah since they did not do what Jonah did. Whoever thinks that is certainly wrong. In fact, every devoted servant of Allah said the same as what Jonah said, "There is no god but You, Glory to You. I was indeed wrong" [21:87], as the first and the last of the prophets said. The first of them, Adam, said, "Our Lord, we have wronged our own souls. If you forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your mercy, we will certainly be lost" [7:23]. And the last and greatest of all the prophets, Muḥammad (peace be on him), said, as reported in an authentic *ḥadīth* from 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib concerning the opening of the prayer, "O Allah, you are the King, there is no god but You. You are my Lord and I am Your servant. I have wronged myself. I admit my mistakes. Forgive me, then, all of my mistakes. No one forgives sins except You..." (to the end of the *ḥadīth*).[83] Moses also

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[82]Al-Bukhārī, 3415, 3416, 3431; Muslim, 2376, 2377; Abū Dāwūd, 4669; Aḥmad, 1:242, 254.

[83]Muslim, 771; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 760; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3417, 3418, 3419; An-Nasā'ī, 2:129-130; Aḥmad, 1:94, 95.

said, "'My Lord, I have indeed wronged myself. Please forgive me.' And he was forgiven as Allah is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful" [28:16].

Allah said about Jonah, "Wait with patience for the command of Your Lord and be not like the companion of the fish" [68:48], thus forbidding the Prophet (peace be on him) to be like Jonah and, instead, commanding him to be like those messengers of resolute purpose. Allah tells him, "Have patience like those of resolute purpose had patience" [46:35]. As for those who say, "I am better than he," given that it is not fitting for a superior to boast over an inferior, what about the case where the boasting person actually is not superior to the others? Truly, Allah does not love arrogant, vainglorious people. In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "It has been revealed to me that you should be humble; no one should boast over another, and no one should affront anyone else."[84] Since Allah has prohibited boasting over ordinary Muslims, what about exalting oneself over a noble prophet? This is why the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "It does not behoove anyone to say, 'I am better than Yūnus Ibn Matta'."' This is a general prohibition stating that everyone should refrain from exalting himself over Jonah.

As for the *ḥadīth*, "Whoever says, 'I am better than Yūnus Ibn Matta' is mistaken," if the Prophet (peace be on him) really was superior to Jonah, then this statement would be incorrect and the Prophet (peace be on him) would have been wrong. This possibility is obviously ruled out, as the Prophet (peace be on him) would not utter a falsehood. Therefore, the *ḥadīth* should be taken to refer to men in general. That is, "Whoever says that is mistaken." That the Prophet is not included therein is not difficult to accept. Allah has said, "If you were to join (gods with Allah), truly fruitless would be your work..." [29:65]. Although these words have been addressed to the Prophet (peace be on him), he has been protected from ever committing *shirk*. Therefore, such statements are simply pronouncing a general rule regarding reward or punishment for different acts.

The Prophet stated that he is the leader of all of the Children of Adam because he had to make such a statement, for we could not possibly know his position except through him. Since no prophets would come after him, he had to inform us of his exalted position in Allah's sight. In the same way, he told us about the virtues of the prophets before him (Allah's blessings be on all of them). That is

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[84]Muslim, *Al-Jannah*, 2865; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 4895; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4179.

why he followed up his statement by saying, "and this is not boasting." Could anyone who believes in Allah and the Hereafter actually say that the position of one who ascended to his Lord, a position so great and honorable, is like the position of one who was swallowed by a fish because he had dome something worthy of blame? How can one exalted, honored and favored be equated with one who faced an ordeal and was scolded? One was taken directly to the presence of Allah and the other was chided. The person who gave such an explanation of the *ḥadīth* had built his distorted conclusion on words that the Messenger (peace be upon him) did not say. His words cannot be cited against the view that Allah is above the world, a view which is established by numerous definitive texts and evidences, which exceed one thousand, as we will discuss later, God willing, when discussing the author's statement, "Allah encompasses all things and is above all."

(33) He is very dear to the Lord of the Worlds.

It is confirmed that the Prophet (peace be on him) enjoyed the highest degree of Allah's love, which is *khūllah* (intimacy). He said, "Allah took me as His most intimate friend (*khalīl*) as He had earlier taken Abraham as His most intimate friend."[85] On another occasion he said, "If I were to take an inhabitant of the Earth as my most intimate friend, I would chose Abū Bakr. But Allah, the Most Gracious, has taken your companion (ī.e. the Prophet) as His most intimate friend."[86] Both of these *aḥādīth* are in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* (of Imām Muslim). They clearly refute those who say that *khūllah* (intimacy) was only for Abraham while *maḥabbah* (love) was for Muḥammad. Therefore, they say, Abraham is the *khalīl Allah* ('the intimate of Allah') while Muḥammad is Allah's *ḥabīb* ('beloved'). In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, there are also the words, "Let it be known that I (the Prophet) have no *khalīl* among mankind."[87]

As for love, it has been confirmed for many others besides the Prophet (peace be on him). For example, Allah says, "Allah loves those who do good" [3:134]; "Truly, Allah loves the pious" [3:76], and, "Truly, Allah loves those who keep themselves pure and clear" [2:222].

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[85]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Muslim, Al-*Masājid,* 532; also in Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 1686.
[86]Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2383; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3656; Ibn Mājah, 93; Aḥmad, 1:377, 389, 409, 433.
[87]Muslim, 532; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 1986.

It is clear, therefore, that those who say that intimacy (*khūllah*) was reserved for Abraham and that Muḥammad was only given love (*maḥabbah*) are wrong. The truth is that *khūllah* was reserved for both of them while love was granted to many others. At-Tirmidhī recorded on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās a *ḥadīth* which states, "Abraham is the *khalīl* of Allah. As for me, I am the *ḥabīb* of Allah. And this is not boasting."[88] But this *ḥadīth* is not authentic.

Love has different degrees:

First is *'ilāqah*, where the heart has fondness for the beloved.

Second is *irādah*, where the heart is inclined towards the beloved and seeks the beloved.

Third is *ṣabābah*, where the heart overflows with love which cannot be checked, in the same way that the flow of water into a tunnel cannot be checked.

Fourth is *gharām*, where the love clings to the heart and is always present. From the same root is *ghārim*, which means 'one who keeps constant company'. Allah has used it as an adjective, "...the torment of Hell will always be with them (gharam)" [25:65].

The fifth is *mawaddah* or *wūdd*. This is the pure, sincere and real love. Allah says in the Qur'ān, "The Merciful will set for them His pure love (*wūdd*)" [19:96].

Sixth is *shaghaf*, which is infatuation, or love that has gone into the innermost recesses of the heart.

The seventh is *'ishq*. This is the extreme love that even threatens the life of the lover. One cannot attribute this kind of love to Allah, nor is this the kind of love that the servant has for his Lord, even though some people do use this term. There is a difference of opinion concerning why it is prohibited. Some say that it is because the word never occurs in the Qur'ān or *ḥadīth*. Other reasons are also given. Perhaps, it is prohibited to use this term because it implies lust (shahwah).

Eighth is *tatayyūm*, which means love that enslaves.

Ninth is *ta'abbud*, or worship.

And tenth is *khūllah*. This is the love that permeates and fills the spirit and the heart of the lover.

These types have also been mentioned in different sequences by different people. But the above order is the best. A little reflection will reveal its merits.

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[88]Part of a long *ḥadīth* in At-Tirmidhī, 3620; Ad-Dārimī, 1:26. However, two of its transmitters, Zam'ah Ibn Ṣāliḥ and Salāmah Ibn Wahrām, are rated weak (*ḍā'if*) transmitters. At-Tirmidhī has consequently called it *gharīb*.

Know that *maḥabbah* and *khūllah* have been attributed to Allah. They are attributed in a way becoming His greatness and majesty, as is the case with all His other attributes. Of the different types of love mentioned above, only four are to be predicated of Allah, *irādah*, *wūdd*, *maḥabbah* and *khūllah*, since these are the only terms that have been mentioned in the texts (of the Qur'ān and Sunnah).

There is a difference of opinion about the exact definition of mahabbah. Around thirty definitions have been given. But they hardly fare better than love. They usually obscure more than illuminate. Such terms are clear and need no definition. They are as clear as water, air, earth, hunger and so on.

(34) All claims to prophecy after him are false (*ghayy*) and fanciful (*hawa*).

It was established earlier that Muḥammad (peace be on him) was the last of the prophets. Hence, anyone who claims prophethood after him is a liar. If such a person should perform miracles and present clear proofs of his sincerity, how can he be called a liar? We reply to this by saying that such would never occur and the question is merely hypothetical. In fact, it is not possible. This is true because Allah has declared him to be the last prophet. Therefore, it is impossible that anyone could claim to be a prophet and not have some signs that show that his claim is false.

Ghayy is the opposite of *rashād* (rightly guided). And *hawa* means that it comes from a person's desires. That is, such a claim to prophecy is based on the desires of the soul and not on evidence. Hence, it is a false claim.

(35) He has been sent to all jinns and all mankind with truth, guidance, light and illumination.

Concerning the Prophet being sent to all the jinns, Allah states, quoting a jinn, "My people, hearken to the one who invites you to Allah.." [46:31]. Sūrat Al-Jinn also indicates that he was sent to them. Muqātil said, "Allah never sent a messenger to both men and jinns before him." But that is a very strange statement. For Allah has said, "Assembly of jinns and men, did prophets from among you not come to you?" [6:130]. Messengers were only human and there were no jinn messengers. This is what Mujahid and others of the Elders and later scholars stated. Ibn 'Abbās said, "Messengers are from humans, and from jinns are only warners." The apparent meaning of the words of the jinn, "We hearkened to the book that

was revealed after Moses," suggests that Moses was also sent to the jinns. Allah knows best.

Ibn Jarīr reported that Ad-Daḥḥāk Ibn Muzāḥim believed that the jinns did have their own messengers and he used the above verse to support his claim. But using that verse as evidence may not be correct, since it is vague and not specific. It is - Allah knows best - like Allah's statement, "Out of the two come pearls and coral" [55:22], which actually means 'from one of them'.

That the Prophet (peace be on him) was sent to all mankind has been clearly stated in the Qur'ān. Note the following verses, "We have not sent you but as a messenger to all mankind giving them glad tidings and warning them" [34:28]. "Say (Muḥammad): Mankind! I am the messenger of Allah to you all" [7:158]. "This Qur'ān has been revealed to me by inspiration that I may warn you and all those whom it reaches" [6:19]. "And We have sent you as a messenger to mankind and enough is Allah for witness" [4:79]. "Is it a matter of wonderment to men that We have sent our inspiration to a man among themselves – that he should warn mankind and give the good news to the Believers that they have before their Lord the lofty rank of sincerity" [10:2]. "Blessed is He Who sent down the criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures" [25:1]. "And say to the People of the Book and to those who are unlearned: Do you (also) submit yourselves? If they do, they are in correct guidance. But if they turn back, your duty is to convey the Message" [3:20].

The Prophet (peace be on him) also stated, "Allah has given me five things which He did not give to any prophet before me: He supported me by casting fear into the hearts of my enemies, even if they were a month's journey away; He has made the whole earth pure for me and allowed me to pray anywhere I wish, so my followers may offer prayer wherever they are when the time comes; He has allowed me to use the spoils of war that He did not allow to others before me; He has allowed me intercession (*shafā'ah*); and He has sent me to all of mankind, whereas He had sent each earlier prophet only to his own community."[89] This *ḥadīth* was recorded by both Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. He also said, "Whoever hears of me, be he Jew or Christian, and does not believe in me, will go to Hell."[90] This was recorded by Muslim. It is known by necessity, or in other words, it is self-evident to all who know the teachings of

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[89]Al-Bukhārī, 335, 438, 3122; Muslim, Al-*Masājid,* 521; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Ghusl*, 1:219-211; Ad-Dārimī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1:322-323; Aḥmad, 2:412; At-Tirmidhī, 1553.

[90]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 153.

the religion of Islam that the Prophet (peace be on him) was sent to all of mankind.

Some Christians argue that he was sent only to the Arabs. This is obviously wrong. If they accept that he was a prophet, they must accept everything he said. He himself stated that he was sent to all mankind. The Messenger (peace be on him) does not lie. Whatever he says must be accepted. Furthermore, it is an established fact that the Prophet (peace be on him) wrote to Xerxes, Caesar, the Negus, Maqawqas, and many other kings of his time, and invited them to Islam.[91]

The author said, "*wa kafati al-wara*" and the use of the *jar* (genitive case) does not seem to be correct, grammatically speaking, with respect to the word *kafah* because the Arabs only use the word in the substantive case.[92]

There are three opinions concerning the syntactic parsing of the Qur'ānic verse, "And We have not sent you (Muḥammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all mankind (*kāfatan li an-nāss*)" [34:28]. The first opinion is that it is the substantive *kaf* and the doer of the action. The *tā* at the end is a hyperbole.[93] The meaning of the verse in this case would be 'You keep the people away from evil.' Some say it is the infinitive *kaff*, meaning *kaffan*, meaning that he is only sent to constrain people from evil completely, the use of the infinitive for the substantive being common. The second opinion is that it is substantive for the word "mankind". But this is objected to because *ḥāl al-majrūr* cannot be preceeded by anything, according to the majority of the scholars. The response to that is that the Arabs use it a lot in that manner and it must be accepted. This is the chosen opinion of Ibn Mālik, the famous grammarian. Therefore, the verse means, "We did not send you except to all the people." The third opinion is that it is an adjective for the unstated, assumed infinitive, meaning, therefore: 'as a complete mission'. The objection to this has already been stated and that is that *kaf* is only used in the substantive case.

The author's words, "the truth (*al-ḥaqq*), guidance (*al-hudā*), light (*an-nūr*) and illumination (*aḍ-ḍīyā'*)" all refer to the Faith (*ad-dīn*) and the Shari'ah which the Prophet (peace be on him) brought

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[91]For a discussion of this point, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Al-Jawāb aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ li man Baddala Dīn al-Masīḥ* (Matabī al-Majd at-Tijārīyyah, n.d.), vol. 2, pp. 38-42.

[92]Again, this is in reference to the grammatical structure of the Arabic text of the *Creed* and need not concern the English reader, but has been included in the translation for the sake of completeness.

[93]Otherwise, the word would be feminine.

and which have been established by the texts of the Qur'ān and other proofs. *Ḍīyā'* is stronger than *nūr*. Allah has said, "It is He Who has appointed the sun a dazzling radiance (*ḍīyā'*) and the moon a radiating light (*nūr*)" [11:5].

(36) The Qur'ān is the word of Allah.

It originated from Him as articulated speech in an unknown manner (*bilā kayfīyyah*). Allah revealed it to His Prophet by inspiration (*waḥī*). The Believers bear witness to its revelation. They are certain that is the actual speech of Allah. It is not created like the speech of human beings. Whoever hears it and thinks it is the speech of man is an infidel. Allah has condemned and censured him and threatened him with Hell-Fire when He says, "I will burn him in the Hell-Fire" [74:26]. By Allah's threatening with the Fire those who say, "This is nothing but the word of a mortal" [74:25], we know and become certain that it is the speech of the Creator of mankind and is completely unlike he speech of mankind.

This is one of the basic and most important principles of Islam. But on this question, many people and groups went astray. What Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, may Allah have mercy on him, stated is the truth, which is proven by Qur'ān and Sunnah for whoever ponders them. It is also supported by natural human endowment (*fiṭrah*) that is not vitiated by doubts or corrupted by erroneous ideas.

People were divided into nine groups over this question of the speech of Allah.[94] These were:

1. The word of Allah is nothing but ideas that descend upon a human soul from the active intellect, according to some, or from a different source, according to others. This is the view of the Sabaeans and the philosophers.

2. It is a creation of Allah that exists separate from Him. This is the view of the Mu'tazilah.

3. It is the thought in the mind of Allah, at once command, prohibition, enunciation and information. When it was communicated in Arabic it became the Qur'ān. When it was communicated in Hebrew it became the Torah. That is the opinion of Ibn Kullāb and those who agree with him, such as Al-Ash'arī and others.

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[94]In the subsequent discussion, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz closely follows what was written by Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, vol. 2, pp. 162-213, and Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Mukhtasar as-Sawā'iq al-Murṣalāh*, vol. 2, pp. 286-298.

4. It is the outward letters and sounds which assembled in eternity. A group of theologians and scholars of *ḥadīth* hold this view.[95]

5. It is certainly letters and sounds, but Allah uttered them in speech after a time during which He had not spoken. This is the opinion of the Karramīyyah and others.

6. It is the speech of Allah that He brings into being out of His knowledge and will, subsisting by Him. This is the opinion of the author of *Al-Mu'tabar*.[96] Ar-Razī seems to have been inclined to this opinion in his *Al-Maṭālib al-'Alīyyah*.

7. It refers to an idea subsisting in Him, which He created later in someone else. This view was held by Abū Mansūr Al-Māturīdī.

8. It refers to an eternal idea subsisting in Him, as well as the sounds that He created in someone else. This is the view of Abū Al-Ma'ālī and his followers.

9. Allah has been speaking from eternity if, when and as He wills to speak. He has been speaking in words which have sounds that can be heard. As a whole, His speech is eternal, even though a particular sound is not eternal. This is the view of the leading *imāms* of the *ḥadīth* and Sunnah.

The author again has used a *kasrah* in *inna al-Qur'ān kalām Allahu*. The reason for it is the same as in the earlier statements. That is, they are all ruled by the governing words, "We say (*naqul*) about Allah's oneness."[97]

The words of the author, "It originated from Him as articulated speech in an unknown manner (*bilā kayfīyyah*)," are directed against the Mu'tazilah and those who believe that the Qur'ān did not proceed from Allah, as noted above. They say that we call it the word of Allah simply to honor it, in the same way that we say the house of Allah, or the camel of Allah. They misinterpret the texts, and their conclusions are false.

Things that are ascribed to Allah are sometimes intangible and sometimes they are things that exist. When we ascribe objects to

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[95]In their notes to the text, At-Turkī and Al-Arnawūṭ doubt the ascription of this view to scholars of *ḥadīth* since the opinion is not in conformity with the Sunnah.

[96]The author of *Al-Mu'tabar fī al-Ḥikmah* (Hyderabad, 1375) is Abū Al-Barakāt Ḥibbatullah Ibn Malka (ca. 547/1152), a physician and a very distinguished philosopher of Islam. He was originally a Jew but later embraced Islam. He was the court physician of Al-Mustanjid. He died during Ramaḍān and was buried in Baghdad.

[97]Another grammatical point. After the phrase, "We say (*naqul*)" the following related clauses must begin with a *kasrah* instead of a *hamza* to show that they are related to the first clause.

Allah, we mean that they are distinguished and honorable objects which Allah created. This is what we mean when we say, for example, the house of Allah, the camel of Allah, and so forth. But when we ascribe intangibles to Allah and say, for example, the knowledge of Allah, His power, His honor, His glory, His majesty, His speech, His life, His transcendence, His dominance, which are all His attributes; it is not possible that they were created by Allah.

When we say that Allah speaks, we are affirming one of His attributes of perfection. Its denial is to attribute to Him a defect. This is clearly demonstrated by Allah's statement, "The people of Moses made, in his absence, out of the ornaments the image of a calf (for worship) which seemed to make a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor show them the way?" [7:148]. The worshipers of the calf, their infidelity notwithstanding, knew their Lord better than the Mu'tazilah, since they did not say to Moses that His Lord could not speak. About the calf Allah also says, "Could they not see that it would not return them a word (for answer), and that it had no power either to harm them or to do them good?" [20:89]. From this remark it is clear that the inability to answer or speak is an argument which Allah has used to deny the divinity of the calf.

The strongest objection that the Mu'tazilah have raised against Allah's speech is that it would mean comparing Allah with man and attributing to Him a body. This objection is not valid. When we say that Allah speaks we add the qualification, "as it behooves His majesty". Allah has said, "That day We will set a seal on their mouths. But their hands will speak to us, and their feet will bear witness to all that they did" [36:65]. We do believe that hands and feet will speak, but we do not know in what manner they will speak. Similarly, Allah says, "They will say to their skins: 'Why do you bear witness against us?' They will reply: 'Allah has given us ability to speak, He Who gives ability to speak to everything'" [41:21]. We likewise believe that pebbles and food glorified Allah, that stones gave salutation, and the sounds of articulated words came from them even though they did not have a mouth.[98]

The author has pointed to this in his words, "It originated from Him as articulated speech in an unknown manner (*bilā kayfīyyah*)." That is, it proceeded from Him and He uttered it in a manner unknown to us. He further underlines this point by saying, "as articulated speech (*qawl-an*)." *Qawl* is a verbal noun and, as such, it

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[98]Muslim, 2277; Aḥmad, 5:89, 95, 105; At-Tirmidhī, 3624; Ad-Dārimī, 1:12; and Al-Bukhārī, 3579; Aḥmad, 1:460; At-Tirmidhī, 3633; Ad-Dārimī, 1:15.

stresses that it was really an action of uttering words. Allah has emphasized the same by using the verbal noun *taklīm*. He says, "*kallama Allahu Mūsa taklima* (Allah spoke to Moses in words)" [4:164]. What can there be other than truth except misguidance?

Some of the Mu'tazilah said to Abū 'Amr Ibn Al-'Alā, "We wish you would read, *kallama Allaha Mūsā*"[99] - changing Allah to the objective case and giving the meaning that Moses spoke. Abū 'Amr said to them, "Suppose I recite the verse in the manner you say, what will you do about the verse, 'When Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and His Lord spoke to Him (*kallamahu Rabbuhu*) [7:143]?" Thus the Mu'tazilah were flustered.

How much evidence is there in the Qur'ān and Sunnah that Allah speaks to the people of Paradise and others? For example, Allah says, "Peace! a word (of salutation) from a Lord Most Merciful" [26:58]. Jābir reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "When the people of Paradise are enjoying their life in happiness, a light will shine forth and they will raise their heads and, lo and behold, Allah will appear to them from above. He will say, 'Peace be on you, people of Paradise.' This is the meaning of Allah's words, 'Peace! a word (of salutation) from a Lord Most Merciful.' He will look upon them and they will look upon Him. They will not turn their glances to any other bounty as long as He looks upon them. (Then) a veil will be drawn over Him. However, His grace and His light will continue to shine over their abode."[100] This *ḥadīth* was recorded by Ibn Mājah and others.

That *ḥadīth* affirms Allah's attribute of speech as it also affirms His visibility and transcendence. Given that, how could the opinion that all of the Lord's speech is one thought be true? Allah says in the Qur'ān, "Surely those who sell the covenant of faith with Allah and their own oaths will have no portion in the Hereafter, nor will Allah speak to them or look at them" [3:77]. Allah will thus humiliate them by not speaking to them. It means that Allah will not speak to them with any noble speech; that is the correct interpretation, because in another verse it states that Allah says to the people in the Hell-fire, "Away with you into this (ignominy)! And speak no more unto Me"

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[99]Thus changing the meaning to 'Moses spoke to Allah'.

[100]Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 184; Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyah al-Awliyā' wa Ṭabaqat al-Aṣfiyā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1400/1980, 3rd edition; henceforth referred to as *Al-Ḥilyah*), vol. 6, pp 208-209. Among the narrators of this *ḥadīth* is Abū 'Asim Al-'Ibadānī, who is slightly weak. And his source was Al-Faḍhl Ibn 'Isa Ar-Ruqāshī, whose *aḥādīth* are rejected. See Al-Haythamī, *Majmā' az-Zawā'id wa Manba' al-Fawā'id* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabī, 1402/1982), 3rd edition, vol. 7, p. 98.

[23:108]. It is obvious that if He were not to speak to His faithful servants they would come down to the level of the unfaithful, and there would be no sense in specifying that He would not speak to His enemies.

A subchapter in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Al-Bukhārī has been given the name "The speech of the Lord, Blessed and Exalted, with the People of Paradise." That subchapter contains a number of *aḥādīth*. The greatest blessing that the people of Paradise will receive is the vision of Allah's face and His speaking to them. Denying that is denying the real essence of Paradise, the highest and best blessing available therein.

The Mu'tazilah argue that since Allah has said, "Allah is the Creator of all things," and since the Qur'ān is a thing, it must therefore be created. This is really strange. This is because, according to them, the actions of human beings are created by men and not by Allah. They exclude such acts from being "things" while they include the speech of Allah as a "thing", though it is one of His attributes. By it (His speech), things are created as it is by His command that things come into existence. He says, "(He made) the sun, the moon and the stars subservient by His command (*amr*). Know, it is for Him to create (*khalq*) and to govern (*amr*)" [7:54]. He has thus differentiated between creation and command. If command had been something created, there must have been another command to create it. But this implies a third command to create the second command and so on, *ad infinitum*. This is plainly false. Again, if their argument were extended, it would include such attributes of Allah as knowledge and power, and reduce them to created things, which is open blasphemy. His knowledge is a thing. His power is a thing. His life is a thing. If these things were included under the verse, "Allah is the Creator of all things," they would be considered created after a time when they did not exist. Exalted is Allah above such beliefs.

How can it be correct to become a speaker by someone else's speech? That is not correct. If that were true, all the speech that He creates in any non-living or living animal would equally be His speech and there would be no difference between speaking (*naṭaqa*) and making somebody speak (*anṭaqa*). On the Day of Judgment, our skins will say, "Allah has made us speak" [41:21], and they will not say, "Allah has spoken." It would also mean that He is the speaker of every word that He creates in any creature, be it something false, a lie, an infidelity, or crazed words. Allah is exalted above that. But, in fact, monists do not shy away from such statements. Ibn 'Arabī,

for example, said, "Every word that comes into being is His word, whether it is in prose or in poetry."[101]

If it were correct to be qualified with an attribute that another has, it would be correct to call a seeing person blind and vice-versa, the former because someone else is blind and the latter because someone else is endowed with sight. It would also be correct to ascribe to Allah every attribute that He has created in anything – colors, smells, tastes, measurements, and so on.

Similar objections were made by Imām 'Abdul-'Azīz Al-Makkī against Bishr Al-Murisī in a debate before Al-Mā'mūn. He asked the latter not to go beyond the text of the Qur'ān to prove his point. Bishr appealed to the caliph to direct 'Abdul-'Azīz not to insist on texts from the Qur'ān and to argue with him on other grounds. He said, "If then 'Abdul-'Azīz does not give up his view and accept that the Qur'ān is created, I may be killed." 'Abdul-'Azīz said, "Would you like to open the debate." Bishr said, "You go ahead." 'Abdul-'Azīz said, "You have to take one of the following three positions as there is no fourth possibility. Either Allah created the Qur'ān, His speech in our view, in Himself; or He created it as existing by and in itself; or He created it in something else." Bishr replied, "I believe that Allah created the Qur'ān as He created every other thing," and he refused to reply directly to the question. Al-Mā'mūn asked 'Abdul-'Aziz, "Explain the matter yourself and leave Bishr for he seems confounded." 'Abdul-'Azīz said, "If Bishr says that Allah created His speech in Himself, this is impossible because Allah cannot be the locus of anything contingent and created. He cannot have in Him what is created. If, on the other hand, he says that Allah has created it in something else, he would have to accept that every speech which Allah has created in anything is His speech. Finally, if He says that He has created it as existing by and in itself, that is inconceivable, for there is no speech but what exists by a speaker, as there is no will but what exists by one who wills, and no knowing but what exists by a knower. We cannot think of any speech that exists by itself and speaks by itself. Since all of these possibilities are unacceptable, and the Qur'ān cannot be said to have been created in any of these senses, we conclude that it is an attribute of Allah." This is the gist of the debate that Imām 'Abdul-'Azīz narrated in his book, *Al-Hidah*.[102]

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[101] Ibn 'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥat al-Makkīyyah* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 141.

[102] *Al-Hidah*, pp. 79-80. As noted earlier, this work most likely is not authentically that of 'Abdul-'Aziz.

The denotation of the word *kull* (all) varies according to the context and is determined by the clues that the language carries. Referring to the storm that He sent upon the people of 'Ad, Allah says, "It will destroy all things (*kulli shayy*) by the command of its Lord. Then by the morning nothing was to be seen except their houses" [46:25]. The houses are things but they are not included in the "all things" that were destroyed by the storm. This is because what was meant was that the storm would destroy everything which can usually be destroyed by a strong storm and which deserved to be destroyed. Similarly, Allah described what Bilqis possessed in these words, "She was given all things" [27:23]. What is meant by "all things" here is everything that kings need. This qualification can be understood from the context. What the hoopoe wanted to say is that she had everything to rule her kingdom with and needed nothing. Many other examples of this nature can be given.

The meaning in the verse, "The Creator of all things" [13:12], is everything that is created. Everything other than Allah is created. This will definitely include human acts but certainly would not include Allah and His attributes because they are not other than He. Allah has all the attributes of perfection; they are inseparable from His essence. The separation of the attributes from the essence is inconceivable, as we have said earlier when commenting on the eternity of divine attributes. In fact, the verse which the Mu'tazilah quote in their support goes against them, for if Allah's words, "Allah created everything," were itself created, it could not be cited as an argument.

As for their argument from the verse, "We have made (*ja'alnā*) it a Qur'ān in Arabic" [45:3], it is their weakest argument. When *ja'ala* is used in the sense of *khalaqa* (create), it has only one object. For example, the verses, "He made (*ja'ala*) the darkness and the light" [6:1], "We made (*ja'alnā*) from water every living being. Will they not believe? And We have set (*ja'alnā*) on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them, and we have made (*ja'alnā*) therein roadways (between mountains) for them to pass through so that they might find their way. And We have made (*ja'alnā*) the heavens as a canopy well-guarded" [21:30-32].

But when *ja'alnā* takes two objects, it does not mean create. For example, "And break not your oaths after you have confirmed them. Indeed you have made (*ja'altum*) Allah your surety" [16:91]; "And make not Allah's name (*lā taj'alū*) an excuse in your oaths against doing good, or acting rightly" [2:244]; "Those who have made (*ja'alū*) the Qur'ān into shreds" [15:91]; "And take not (*lā taj'al*) with Allah another object of worship" [17:39]; "And they make

(*ja'alū*) into females angels who themselves serve Allah" [43:19]. Such verses are numerous. What I want to say is that we should understand in a similar vein the verse, "We have made (*ja'alnā*) it a Qur'ān in Arabic" [43:3].

Similarly unsound is their argument from the verse, "He has called (*nūdiya*) from the right bank of the valley from a bush in hallowed ground" [28:30]. This means, they claim, that Allah created the words in a bush and Moses heard it from the bush. But they ignore the words that precede and follow the verse. Allah said, "When he arrived there, a voice called (*nūdiya*) him from the right side of the valley" [28:30]. *Nida* is a call from a distance. Hence it means that Moses heard the call from the fringe of the valley. Then Allah says, "In the hallowed ground from a bush" [28:30]. This means that the call was made on the hallowed ground near the bush. For when I say that I heard the words of Zayd from the house, what I mean is that the words came from the house and not that the house spoke. If the words which Moses heard had been created in the bush, the bush would have been their speaker. Hence, the words (which occur in the verse), "Moses, I am Allah, the Lord of the Worlds," would have been uttered by the bush. Now can these words be uttered by something other than Allah?

If it is possible that a thing other than Allah may say these words, it is also correct for Pharaoh to have said, "I am your lord, most high" [19:24]. For both sets of words are created and spoken by a being other than Allah. To meet this objection, they have tried to differentiate between the two speech acts. They say that the former words were created by Allah in the bush, but it was Pharaoh who created the latter words. This leads them to believe that there is a creator other than Allah. This is an issue related to the question of human acts, which we will take up later, God willing.

One might refer to the verse, "This is truly the word of an honored messenger" [69:40; 81:91], and argue that the Qur'ān was produced by a messenger, either Gabriel or Muḥammad. To refute this argument, it is enough to point out that the verse says that is a word of a messenger that is conveying it on behalf of the sender. It does not say that is the word of an angel or prophet. By that, one knows that is being conveyed on behalf of the sender and it was not being created by the conveyor.

Furthermore, the same words are found in two verses; in one verse, it refers to the angel Gabriel and in the other it refers to Muḥammad (peace be on him). This further supports the argument that the Qur'ān is the word of the messenger only in the sense that he was communicating it rather than originating it, for if one had

composed it, the other could not have been its composer. Again, following the words in Sūrah 81, we have the adjective "faithful" (*amīn*) qualifying the messenger. This shows that the messenger communicated the words as they were revealed to him, neither adding anything from himself nor deleting anything. He faithfully conveyed everything he was told.

Again, Allah has condemned as an infidel one who says that the Qur'ān is the word of a man. Since Muḥammad was a man, therefore, whoever says that the Qur'ān is the word of Muḥammad in the sense that he composed it is certainly an infidel. It makes no difference if instead he says that is the word of a jinn or angel. Words are the words of the one who originally states them and not of the one who communicates them. If someone recites the line, "Stop! Let us weep to remember / a beloved and a house..." you will say that is the poetry of Imra' Al-Qays.[103] Similarly, if you hear someone say, "Actions will be judged by their motives, and everyone will have what he intended,"[104] you will say that these are the words of the Prophet (peace be on him). Or if you hear one reciting, "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. You only do we worship and Your aid only do we seek" [1:1-4], you will say that these are the words of Allah - that is, if you have knowledge of those facts. Otherwise you would say, "I do not know whose words these are." If anyone contradicted you on this point, he would be wrong. That is why, whenever one hears a poem or a passage from anyone, he asks, "Are these your words or someone else's?"

In short, the Ahl as-Sunnah, the four schools of *fiqh* and others of the Elders and later scholars all agree that the Qur'ān is the uncreated speech of Allah. Beyond that point, the later scholars differed as to whether the speech of Allah is a single thought existing in itself or if it is words and sounds which Allah uttered at a particular time and not before, or He has been speaking from eternity, if, when, and as He has willed, and that His speech as a class is eternal.

Some Mu'tazilah do say that the Qur'ān is uncreated. But by that they mean that the Qur'ān is not fabricated, concocted or false. That

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[103]The line quoted here is part of the first verse of a famous ode of his. See his *Diwān*, ed. by Muḥammad Abū Al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Al-Ma'ārif, 1389/1969), p. 8.

[104]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī, 1, 54, 2529, 3898, 5070, 6689, 6953; Muslim, *Al-Imārah*, 1907; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṭ-Ṭalāq*, 2201; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Jihād*, 1647; An-Nasā'ī, *Aṭ-Ṭahārah*, 1:58-60; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 2427; Aḥmad, 1:25, 43.

is, it is true and authentic. There is no question that this meaning is consistent with what all Muslims believe.

The point on which they have differed is whether the Qur'ān is a thing created by Allah, or whether it is His words which He has spoken and which exist by Him. This was the question put by the Ahl as-Sunnah. As to its fabrication or spuriousness, there is no difference among Muslims that such an allegation is false. There is also no question that the leaders of the Mu'tazilah and others are from heretical sects. They admit that their beliefs concerning *tawḥīd*, Allah's attributes and predestination are not things passed down, either from the Book or the Sunnah or from the leaders of the Companions and those who followed them in goodness. They claim that human reasoning has led them to such conclusions. They claim that they only take legal rulings on practical acts from the leading *imāms*. If people were left to their uncorrupted nature and instinctive reasoning there would not have been differences among them. But Satan has put baseless ideas into their minds and has divided them into sects. The Qur'ān says, "Those who seek causes of dispute in the Book are in a schism far from the purpose" [2:176].

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's words imply that Allah has been speaking from eternity as and when He has willed, and that His speech as a class is eternal. This is also the view of Abū Ḥanīfah, as appears in his *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, in which he says:

> "The Qur'ān is the word of Allah, whether written in the book, remembered in the hearts, recited by the tongues or revealed to the Prophet. Our recitation of the Qur'ān is created and our writing of the Qur'ān is created and our reciting of it is created. But the Qur'ān itself is not created. What Allah has mentioned in the Qur'ān quoting from Moses and others and from the earlier prophets and from Pharaoh and Iblīs, all of that is the speech of Allah, in which He is informing about them. It is the uncreated speech of Allah. The speech of Moses and other created beings is itself created. But the Qur'ān is the word of Allah and not their speech. Moses heard Allah's words when He spoke to him. He spoke to him with the speech which is His attribute from eternity. And all of His attributes are different from the attributes of the creatures. He knows, but not as we know. He has power, but not as we have power. He sees, but not as we see. He speaks, but not as we speak."[105]

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[105]*Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, pp. 40-50.

From Abū Ḥanīfah's words, "Moses heard Allah's words when He spoke to him. He spoke to him by the speech which is His attribute from eternity," it is clear that he means that when Moses came He spoke to him and it does not mean that He was always and will always be saying, "O Moses..." as some people understand from Allah's words, "When Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and His Lord addressed him..." [7:143]. Abū Ḥanīfah's words contradict the view which some of his followers, like Abū Mansūr Al-Māturidī and others, hold that the speech of Allah is one single idea that subsists in Him and is inaudible and what is heard is the sound that Allah creates in the air. And Abū Ḥanīfah's words, "speech which is His attribute from eternity," further refute the view that Allah came to have the attribute of speech at a particular time and not before that.

Some aspects of the views of the Mu'tazilah, such as that the Qur'ān is speech dependent on the will and power of Allah, that He speaks when He wills, and that He speaks one thing after another, are true and must be accepted. Similarly, some ideas of others, such as that the speech of Allah subsists in Him and is His attribute, and that an attribute subsists only in a subject, are also true and must be accepted and adhered to. It is obligatory to accept whatever statements are correct from the different groups and to turn away from whatever of their statements are refuted by the Shari'ah and sound reason.

It may be said to us that our view makes Allah the locus of contingent events. This objection, we may reply, is rather vague. In one sense, events subsist by Allah. None of the earlier scholars have denied this. On the contrary, the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, the statements of the leading *imāms*, as well as the verdict of reason, uphold it.

When the prophets said that Allah said or called or conversed intimately or that He spoke, they certainly did not mean that Allah created those words which exist separately from Him. On the contrary, they wanted their audience to understand that Allah is the speaker of these words, that they subsist in Him, not in anything else, and that He has uttered them. This was the understanding of 'Ā'ishah, as appears in her statement that she made when Allah refuted the allegation that was brought against her, "I thought I was too insignificant a creature for Allah to speak about me in a revelation that would be recited."[106] If by the speech of Allah

[106]Part of a long *ḥadīth*, Al-Bukhārī, 2261, 4141, 4750; Muslim, *At-Tawbah*, 2270;

something else was meant, something not what the people generally understood, it would have been explained that it has a different meaning to it, since it is not permissible to delay an explanation from the time it is needed.

Neither language nor reason is aware of a speaker whose speech does not subsist by him. If these (objectors) say that they do not accept this view because it would be conceiving Allah on the pattern of man (*tashbīḥ*), they should not affirm Allah's other attributes either. If they say, "He knows but not as we know," we simply say, "He speaks but not as we speak." In fact, the same holds for all of His attributes.

One cannot conceive of a powerful man whose power does not exist in him or of a living thing whose life does not exist in him. (Similarly, one cannot think of a speaker whose speech does not exist in him.) The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I seek refuge in Allah's perfect words, which neither the righteous nor the wicked can escape."[107] Can an intelligent person say that the Prophet (peace be on him) sought refuge in a created thing? In fact, that invocation is like his statements, "I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. I seek refuge in Your forgiveness from Your punishment;"[108] or, "I take refuge in the majesty and power of Allah from the evil that I encounter or might encounter;"[109] and, "I take refuge in Your greatness from being stabbed from beneath."[110] All of those are attributes of Allah. And this aspect has been discussed in its proper place; here we are just making a quick reference to it.

Many later Ḥanafīs believed that the speech of Allah is one and that multiplicity concerns its expression in words, not in itself. Words are created; they are called the word of Allah because they express His speech and communicate it. When it was communicated in Arabic, it became the Qur'ān, and when it was communicated in Hebrew, it became the Torah. Hence, it is the language that varies,

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Aḥmad, 6:197; Abū Dāwūd, 4735.

[107]Aḥmad, 3:419. Part of a *ḥadīth* rated *ṣaḥīḥ* which has been recorded by Ibn As-Sinnī, *'Amāl al-Yawm wa al-Laylah*, ed. by 'Abdul-Qādir Aḥmad 'Ata' (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyāt al-Azhārīyyah, 1389/1969), p. 632.

[108]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1427; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3561; An-Nasā'ī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 3:248; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1179; Aḥmad, 1:96, 118, 150; Muslim, 486.

[109]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Muslim, *As-Salām*, 2202; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 3891; At-Tirmidhī, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 2081; Ibn Mājah, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 3522; Aḥmad, 4:217.

[110]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Aḥmad, 2:125; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 5074; An-Nasā'ī, *Isti'adhah*, 8:282; Ibn Mājah, *Ad-Du'ā'*, 3871.

not the speech. When we say that words are the speech of Allah, we say so in a metaphorical sense.

This view is wrong. It would mean that the words, "Do not come near adultery" [17:32], have the same meaning as "Be steadfast in prayer" [2:143]. Similarly, the Verse of the Throne [2:255] would mean the same as the verses concerning transactions involving debt [2:282-3]. And the meaning of Sūrat Al-Ikhlāṣ [112] would mean the same as Sūrat Al-Lahab [111]. Little reflection is needed to be convinced that this view is wrong and conflicts with the beliefs of the Elders.

The truth is that the Torah, Gospel, Psalms[111] and Qur'ān are literally Allah's word. In fact, His words are innumerable and infinite. He has been speaking from eternity what, when, and as He has willed. And He will go on speaking forever likewise. He says, "Say: If the ocean were ink to write the words of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it for its aid" [18:109]; and, "If all the trees on earth were pens and the ocean were ink, with seven oceans behind it to add to its supply, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. For Allah is Exalted in Power and Wise" [31:27]. If what the scriptures contain were simply an interpretation of Allah's speech and not actually Allah's speech, why is it forbidden for the sexually unclean and otherwise impure to touch it? If what they were to recite was not the Word of Allah, why is it forbidden for the sexually unclean to recite the Qur'ān? The speech of Allah is equally what is remembered by hearts, recite by mouths, and written in books. In all of these forms it is literally Allah's speech, as Abū Ḥanīfah has said in *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*.[112]

If you say, "What is written in the Book is Allah's speech," a literal, correct meaning could be understood. When you say that this speech is written by someone and in his handwriting, this is also literally correct. Similarly, if you say that there is ink in the Book with which the speech is written, this is also literally correct. But when you say that the ink is in the Book, it is not like saying that the heavens and the earth, Muḥammad and Jesus are there in the book. And both these statements are unlike the statement that there is the speech of Allah in the Book. If you do not differentiate between the various meanings of "in" in these statements, you will be mistaken and will not be guided to the truth.

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[111]This is, of course, in reference to the true revelations and not what is in possession of the Jews and Christians today, called the Old Testament and the New Testament.

[112]*Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, p. 40.

Similarly, one must differentiate between reading (*qirā'ah*), which is an act of the reader, and the thing read (*maqrū'*), which is the Creator's speech. You will certainly be misled if you do not differentiate between these two. If a person finds written on a parchment, "Know that everything other than Allah is to perish," written by a known scribe, he can literally say that this is a line of poetry by Labīd, or that this is literally the writing of such-and-such scribe. Both these statements are literally correct and the soundness and literal meaning of each are not to be confused with the soundness and literal meaning of the other.

Grammatically, "*qur'ān*" is a verbal noun. It may mean the act of reading, as in the verse, "Carry on the reading (*qur'ān*) at dawn; for the reading (*qur'ān*) at dawn is witnessed" [17:78]. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Make the reading (*qur'ān*) sweet with your voice."[113] And sometimes it is used to mean what is being read. Allah says, "When you recite the Qur'ān, seek Allah's protection from Satan, the rejected one" [16:78]; and, "When the Qur'ān is read, listen to it with attention and hold your peace, that you may receive Allah's mercy" [7:204]. The Prophet (peace be on him) used the word in that meaning when he said, "The Qur'ān has been revealed according to seven aḥrūf ('modes')."[114] Many more verses and *aḥādīth* can be cited for the two usages. Things exist at different levels: actual existence in reality, in the mind, in speech and in writing. A thing that exists in reality is comprehended as an idea, then expressed in words, and then recorded. Therefore, it being written in a book is its fourth level of being.

Speech has no relationship with the *muṣḥaf* (written record), but speech is what is written without tongue or mind being mediators. The differences between it being recorded in the scriptures of old and on a fine parchment unrolled and in a Book kept hidden are very clear. When Allah says about the Qur'ān, "And lo, it is in the Scriptures of the men of old" [26:196], He means its mention, description and information about it, in the same way that Muḥammad (peace be on him) is recorded with them (i.e. his description).

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[113] Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1468; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Iftitaḥ,* 2:179-180; Ad-Dārimī, 2:474; Aḥmad, 4:283, 285, 296, 304; Ibn Mājah, 1342. Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[114] Al-Bukhārī, 2419, 2992, 5041, 6936, 7550; Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 818; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1475; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Qir'at*, 2944; An-Nasā'ī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 2:150-152; Aḥmad, 1:24, 40, 43.

Certainly, the Qur'ān was revealed by Allah to Muḥammad and not to anyone else beforehand. That is why Allah says, "in the scriptures (*zubūr*)," and did not say, "in the written document" nor "in the Parchment." *Zubūr* is the plural of *zubr* and means 'recording and collection'. Allah's statement, "And lo, it is in the Scriptures of the men of old" [26:196], means the scriptures of the people of the past. In the wording and its root, the word is very clear. Hence, the Qur'ān is very clear and free from any kind of confusion. This is similar to the statement, "...whom they will find described (*maktūban*) with them" [7:157]. Here, maktūban means mentioned (or described). This is different from Allah's words, "(and a Scripture inscribed) on fine parchment unrolled" [52:3-4], or "on a guarded tablet" [85:22], or "in a Book kept hidden" [56:78], because the governing word in these types of sentences must either be a "general verb" (*al-fa'al al-'amah*), such as the verbs to be, become, and so on. These verses need such words. Or we can assume *maktūb fī kitāb* ('recorded in a book') which are different from the general verbs.

Al-kitāb sometimes is mentioned and means the place of the writing and sometimes it is mentioned meaning what is being written. One must differentiate between writing the speech in a book and recording the actual thing that exists in reality. Such a thing that exists in writing can only have its description recorded.[115] The more one ponders these meanings, the clearer the difference becomes.

The speech of Allah as an objective reality is what one hears from Him or from His Messenger. When the hearer hears it, he knows it and remembers it. Hence, the speech of Allah is, for the hearer, something heard, known and remembered. When he utters it, it is something read or recited by him. And when he writes it, it is something written by him. In all these forms, it is literally, not metaphorically, the speech of Allah. One cannot deny this and say that what is written in the Book or what is recited by the reciter is not the speech of Allah. Allah says in the Qur'ān, "If one among the pagans asks you for asylum, grant it to him, so he may hear the word of Allah" [9:6]. Obviously, he will not hear the words of Allah from Allah directly but he will hear them from the one who conveys it from Allah. The verse refutes the view that what is heard is only an interpretation of Allah's speech and not the speech of Allah itself. For Allah has said, "Until he hears the word of Allah," and He did not say, "Until he hears the interpretation of Allah's speech." The

[115]That it is, one cannot actually record the person Muḥammad or 'Abdullah. The most one can do is mention or describe that person.

words are to be taken literally according to the basic rule. Anyone who says that what is written in the Book is an articulation or a report of Allah's speech, but not the speech itself, contradicts the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the faith of the Elders of the Muslim nation. That is sufficient to show that he has erred.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's words also reject the view that the speech of Allah is a single inaudible idea, and that what is heard, revealed, recited or written is not the speech of Allah but its formulation. He clearly states, "The Qur'ān is Allah's speech and originates from Him." Similar statements have also been made by many other of the Elders. They stated that the Qur'ān begins from Allah and returns to Him. The statement, "begins from Allah" is directed against the Jahmīyyah of the Mu'tazilah and others who say that Allah created the speech in an object from where it has originated. But the Elders stated, "It begins from Allah," that is, it is Allah Who has spoken it, not any other being. Allah has said in the Qur'ān, "The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom," [39:1]; "But the word from Me will come true" [22:13]; and, "Say: The Spirit of the Holy (Gabriel) has brought the revelation from Your Lord in truth" [16:102]. And the meaning of the Elders' statement, "It returns to Him," is that it will be completely withdrawn from hearts and paper without leaving anything behind, as has been stated in many *aḥādīth.*[116]

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's words, "in an unknown manner (*bilā kayfīyyah*)," means that the modality of Allah's speech is unknown, not that it is called speech in a metaphorical sense. "Allah revealed it to His Prophet by inspiration (*waḥī*)" means that He has sent it down to him through an angel. The angel Gabriel heard it from Allah. The Messenger Muḥammad (peace be on him) heard it from the angel. And he, the Prophet, recited it to the people. Allah says, "It is a Qur'ān which We have divided into parts so that you may recite it to men at intervals. We have revealed it in stages" [17:106], and "The spirit of faith and truth came down with it to your heart and mind, that you may admonish in the perspicuous Arabic tongue" [26:193-195]. This verse also affirms the transcendence of Allah.

Some people have argued that the "sending down" of the Qur'ān (*inzāl al-Qur'ān*) should be understood like the similar phrases in

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[116]Ibn Mājah, 4049. Commenting on this *ḥadīth*, Al-Buṣīrī stated that its transmitters are reliable (*thiqāt*). See *Misbah az-Zujajah fī Zawā'id Ibn Mājah*, ed. by Mūsa Muḥammad 'Alī and Dr. 'Izzat 'Alī 'Ati'ah (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadithah), p. 254. Also see the *ḥadīth* in Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 4:473.

the Qur'ān, such as "sending down rain" (*inzāl al-matar*), "sending down iron" (*inzāl al-ḥadid*), and "sending down eight kinds of cattle" (*inzāl thamānīyat azwāj min al-an'ām*). The answer to this argument is that, in the case of the Qur'ān, it has been specifically stated that is sent down from Allah. Note all of the following verses, "*Ḥā Mīm*. The revelation of this Book is from Allah, exalted in Power, Full of Knowledge" [40:1-2]; "The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom" [39:1]; "a revelation from Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful" [42:2]; "This is the revelation of the Book, in which there is no doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds" [32:2]; "We sent it down during a blessed night; for We ever wish to warn against evil. In that night is made distinct every affair of wisdom by command from Our presence. We have been sending (Our message)" [4:2-5]; "Say: Then bring a book from Allah which is a better guide than either of them, that I may follow it! Do, if you are truthful" [28:49]; "Those to whom We have given the Book know full well that it has been sent down from your Lord in truth" [6:114]; and, "Say: The Holy Spirit (Gabriel) has brought the revelation from your Lord in truth" [16:102].

But in the case of rain, it has been specifically mentioned that is sent down from the sky, "We send down pure water from the sky (*as-samā'*)" [25:48], that is, from above. At another place, it has been made clear that is being sent down from *al-muzun* [56:69], and at a second place from *al-mu'ṣirāt* [78:14]. Both of these phrases mean the clouds. As for iron or cattle, nothing has been mentioned concerning their source. Therefore, how can one liken the sending down of the Qur'ān with these other types of sending down? Iron is a mineral that is found in the mountains, the highest portions of the earth. It is said that the higher up it is found, the better the quality.

Similarly, animals are created through birth, which requires the sperm to come down from the loins of the male animal into the womb of the female animal. That is why the word anzal is used and not yunzil. Then the fetus comes down from the womb of the mother to the earth. Furthermore, it is well-known that the male animal is on top of the female during mating, so the sperm travels from an upward location downwards. Then, when the animal is born, it once again moves downward from the womb. There are two ways one can understand the verse, "And He provided for you (*anzala lakum*) of (*min*) cattle" [39:6]. *Min* here could be understood to mean, "We provided for you types of animals, eight pairs of animals," or "We provided for you cattle which are of eight types...." The following verse can also be understood in the same

two ways, "He has made for you pairs of yourselves, and of the cattle also pairs..." [42:11].

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's words, "The Believers bear witness to its revelation," mean that what he has said about the Qur'ān being the speech of Allah and about its revelation is the belief of the Elders, the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) and their righteous successors. And that this is the truth.

His words, "They are certain that is the actual speech of Allah. It is not created like the speech of humans," are directed against the Mu'tazilah and others. He has said the word, "actual" in order to refute the erroneous view that Allah's speech is one inaudible idea or that it is mental speech (*kalām nafsī*) that is not heard from Him. A speech act which is thought and not spoken is not speech in reality, otherwise a mute would also be a speaker. It would also follow that what is written in the scripture cannot be called Qur'ān or the word of Allah; it would only be an interpretation of Allah's speech not the speech itself. If a mute were to gesture concerning something and another person understood him and wrote down what he was trying to say, it would be the latter person's words that he used to express the mute's idea. This example exactly illustrates the view they hold. To be sure, they do not call Allah mute; but they do say that the angel grasps the idea that subsists in Allah without any letters or sounds. The angel grasps this pure idea and then he expresses it in words. It is the angel, then, that composed the Qur'ān and articulated it in Arabic, or Allah created the words of the angel in a thing other than him, such as air.

To those who say that the speech of God is a single idea, we may put the following question. Did Moses (peace be on him) hear all of the idea, or just part of it? If the answer is that he heard all of it, then the claim is that he heard all of the speech of Allah. It is obvious that that is not correct. If the answer is that he heard part of the idea, this implies that the idea is divisible. The same would be true of every other word which Allah has spoken or revealed to anyone. Again, when Allah said to the angels, "I will create a vicegerent on the earth" [2:30], or, "Bow down to Adam" [2:34], was it the whole of His speech or part of it? If the reply is that it was the whole speech, it is absurd. But if the answer is that it was a part, it would amount to admitting that Allah's speech is not singular but multiple.

There are four different opinions about what *kalām* (speech) and *qawl* (statement) mean. One opinion is that it connotes the word as well as the meaning, just as the word *insān* (man) connotes both the body and the spirit. This is the view of the Elders. The second is

that it connotes the word only, and the meaning is not part of its connotation but only its implication. A group of the Mu'tazilah and others hold this view. The third is that it connotes the meaning only and its application to the word is only metaphorical, since the word is only a sign for the idea. This view is held by Ibn Kullāb and his followers. The fourth is that at times it connotes the word and at times the idea. Some later followers of the Kullābī school are of this opinion. And they (the followers of Ibn Kullāb) also have a third view, which has been narrated from Abū Al-Ḥassan. This view states that when it refers to Allah's speech, it is used metaphorically, but when it refers to human speech, its meaning is literal. This is so, he says, because the speech of men exists by them, since there can be no speech without a speaker. But the speech of Allah, he thinks, does not exist by Him. Therefore, it cannot be said to literally be His speech. For an elaborate discussion of these views, see the relevant works.

Those who believe that Allah's speech is one, argue from the lines of Akhtāl, "Indeed speech exists in the heart/The tongue is simply its indicator."

This proof is incorrect. It is strange that when someone cites a *ḥadīth* from one or the other of the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections, they object to it and say that is only a solitary report (*khabar al-wāḥid*), even though scholars agree that such a *ḥadīth* should be accepted and acted upon. But on the other hand they argue from a poet's couplet, which is doubtful and not even found in his *diwan* (collection of poems). In fact, the first line of the couplet has been narrated in a different way, "Indeed the thought (*al-bayān*) exists in the heart..." This seems to be more authentic. Even if we grant that the lines are Akhtal's to begin with, we cannot use them as proof. The Christians deviated with respect to the meaning of *kalām*. They believe that Jesus (peace be on him) is the Word of Allah (*logos*). They claim that divinity merged in him with his humanity, or that he is partly human and partly divine. Would it then be acceptable to argue from the lines of a Christian poet who has a mistaken view of theology and *kalām* while disregarding the meaning of *kalām* which is established and well known in Arabic? Furthermore, the meaning of the couplet is not correct. It implies that a mute is to be regarded as a speaker, since he has speech in his mind even though he cannot utter it nor can people hear him. I have stated the points here briefly. For details, one should refer to the relevant works.

There is an interesting point concerning this view. It has a close affinity with the beliefs of the Christians regarding divinity and humanity. They say that the speech of Allah is only an idea that

exists in Him and is inaudible. As for its articulated form, it is created. Hence, the relationship between the speech of Allah, as an eternal idea subsisting in His essence, and the created words, which express the idea, is like the divine appearing in a man who, as the Christians believe, is Jesus. Notice this interesting resemblance.[117]

Another proof that Allah's speech is not just an idea existing in Him is the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him), "No human speech is permitted during our prayers."[118] Another *ḥadīth* states, "Allah commands whatever He wills, and He commands that you should not speak during your prayers."[119] The scholars are agreed that if someone unnecessarily and intentionally speaks during prayer, his prayer is nullified. They also all agree that the thoughts that occur in one's mind concerning worldly things do not nullify the prayer; only speech nullifies the prayer. This shows that the Muslims are in agreement that (the thought in the mind) is not speech.

There is also a *ḥadīth* in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s that states that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah overlooks for my nation the thoughts that occur in the minds as long as they are not spoken aloud or acted upon."[120] Hence the Prophet (peace be on him) differentiated between the thought in the mind (*ḥadīth an-nafs*) and speech. He stated that no one would be punished for evil thoughts unless he spoke them (or acted upon them). There is no difference on this point among the scholars. It is clear, therefore, that only what is uttered by the tongue is speech (*kalām*). This is what is known from the Arabic language in which the Law-Giver has addressed us.

There is also a *ḥadīth* in the *Sunan* that Mu'ādh asked the Prophet (peace be on him) whether people will have to account for what they say. The Prophet (peace be on him) told him, "Will anything hurl people on their faces in the Fire other than what the tongues reap?"[121] This also shows that speech is an act of the

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[117]See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Al-Jawāb aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3, p. 73.

[118]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Muslim, *Al-Masājid,* 537; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 930; An-Nasā'ī, *As-Sahw*, 3:14-18; Aḥmad, 5:448, 449.

[119]Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 924; An-Nasā'ī, *As-Sahw*, 3:19; Aḥmad, 1:377, 409, 415, 435, 463; Al-Ḥumaydī, 94; Ibn Abī Shaybah, Muṣannaf, 2:37.

[120]Al-Bukhārī, 2528, 2529, 6664; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 127; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṭ-Ṭalāq*, 6:156-157; Ibn Mājah, *Aṭ-Ṭalāq*, 2040.

[121]Part of a *ḥadīth* in At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2619; Ibn Mājah, 3973; Aḥmad, 5:231, 236, 237. Its chain in At-Tirmidhī is broken, but Al-Arnawūṭ has called it a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* due to its numerous pieces of supporting evidence.

tongue. In short, the words *qawl* (statement) and *kalām* (speech) and all of their derivatives – perfect, imperfect, imperative, participial and so on – refer to word as well as meaning in the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and language of the Arabs. There was never any dispute among the Companions or their righteous followers regarding the meaning of *kalām*. It was disputed only in later times by heretical scholars, whereafter the controversy spread far and wide.

There is no question, then, that to know the meaning of *kalām*, *qawl* and similar terms, we do not have to refer to a poet. Every speaker of Arabic, past or present, has used these words and knows what they mean, just as he knows what *ra's* (head), *yad* (hand) and *rijl* (leg) mean.

Definitely anyone who says that the speech of Allah is an idea existing in Him and what is read, remembered, written or heard from any reciter is an account (*ḥikāyah*) of His speech and something created, is also saying that the Qur'ān is created, although he may not be aware of it. Allah says, "Say: If the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of the Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof" [17:88]. What is referred to here? Is Allah pointing to what is in His mind or to what is recited and heard by the people? Obviously, it is to what is recited and heard by the people, for what is in the soul of Allah is not something to be pointed to, sent down, recited or heard. The words, "They could not produce the like thereof" cannot mean that they would not be able to produce something like what is in Allah's soul, which they cannot even hear or know. There is no way to know or gain access to what is in the soul of Allah.

If they say that Allah is pointing to the representation and formulation of what is in His soul, rather than itself, and that this is what is recited, written or heard, they are simply saying that the Qur'ān is created. They commit a blasphemy greater than that of the Mu'tazilah, because to represent (*ḥikāyah*) a thing is to produce something like or similar to it. This would amount to the representation and simulation of Allah's attributes. Furthermore, if the recitation were a kind of representation, it would mean that men can produce speech similar to the speech of Allah, and this would contradict the inimitability of the Qur'ān. It would also mean that the reciter uses letters and sounds to represent something that is without letters and sounds.

But we know that the Qur'ān consists of *sūrahs* that are arranged and verses that are articulated, and that are written on sacred leaves. Allah says, "Bring then ten *sūrahs* forged like unto it" [11:13];

"Nay, these are verses self-evident in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge; and none but the unjust reject our verses" [29:49]; and, "It is in books held greatly in honor, exalted in dignity, kept pure and holy" [80:13-14]. Ten good deeds are recorded for every letter of the Qur'ān that a person recites. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I do not say that *Alif Lām Mīm* is a letter; rather, *alif* is a letter, *lām* is a letter and *mīm* is a letter."[122] It is the Qur'ān which is preserved in the hearts of its memorizers and heard from the tongues of its reciters. Sheikh Hāfiẓ ad-Dīn An-Nasafī said in *Al-Manār*, "The Qur'ān is the name for both the wording and the meaning."

Other theologians have made similar statements. It is attributed to Abū Ḥanīfah that he once said it was sufficient to recite the Qur'ān in Farsi during prayer, but he later changed his mind and said, "It is not permissible for anyone who has the ability to recite (in Arabic) to recite it in other than Arabic." Others have said that if someone reads it in other than Arabic, he must either be crazy and deserve medical attention or he is a heretic who deserves to be killed. This is so because Allah spoke it in that language. Its miraculous nature is in both its language and its meaning.

The author has said, "Whoever hears it and thinks it is the speech of man is an unbeliever." Those who deny that the Qur'ān is the word of Allah, or say that it is the word of Muḥammad or any other creature, human or angel, are undoubtedly unbelievers. Even those who say it is the word of Allah but then distort the meaning of that statement are no different from those who say, "This is nothing but the words of a mortal" [74:25]. They share in such unbelief. Satan has certainly led those people astray. God willing, we will discuss their situation in particular while discussing the author's words, "We do not charge anyone who faces the Ka'bah in prayer with unbelief on the basis of a sin unless he holds that sin to be lawful."

The words of the author, "It is completely unlike the word of any mortal," mean that it is incomparably more eloquent, true and dignified. Allah has said, "Whose words would be truer than Allah's?" [4:87]; "Say: If the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of the Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof" [17:88]; "Say: Bring ten *sūrahs* similar to it" [11:13]; and, "Say: Bring then a *sūrah* like unto it" [10:38]. The Arabs who were masters of Arabic and bitterly opposed to the

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[122]At-Tirmidhī, *Thawāb al-Qur'ān*, 2912; Ad-Dārimī, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, 2:429; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:555.

Qur'ān could not produce a small *sūrah* like any of those in the Qur'ān. This proves the veracity of the Messenger's statement that it is from Allah. They were incapable of producing anything similar to it with respect to both its language and its meanings. In fact, they could not produce anything even similar to either of these two aspects. This was the case because the Qur'ān was in perfect Arabic, absolutely flawless and most eloquent. The challenge that no human can produce anything like it is with respect to both its language as well as its meanings, that is, words as well as meaning, not just language. The disjoined letters at the beginning of various *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān point to the Qur'ān's having been revealed in the language and style that the Arabs were acquainted with.

Haven't you noticed that after every such set of disjoined letters there comes a mention of the Qur'ān? For example, "*Alif Lām Mīm*. This is the Book without doubt" [2:1-2]; "*Alif Lām Mīm*. Allah! There is no God but He, the Living, the Self-Sustaining, Eternal. It is He Who sent down to you (step by step) in truth the Book" [3:1-3]; "*Alif Lām Mīm Ṣād*. A Book revealed to you" [7:1-2]; and, "*Alif Lām Rā*. These are the verses of the Book of Wisdom," [19:1-2], and so on. This is to remind them that the noble and gracious Prophet (peace be on him) who was sent to them did not bring them what they could not understand. Instead, he addressed them in their own language.

Heretics have often used the disjoined letters as a pretext to deny that Allah has uttered the Qur'ān or that Gabriel heard it from Him. They have similarly used the verse, "There is nothing like unto Him" [33:11], to deny the attributes of Allah. But the rest of the latter verse, "and He is the Hearing, the Seeing," refutes their denial of divine attributes. Similarly, many verses, such as "then bring a *sūrah* like unto it" [10:38], also refute their view that the words of the Qur'ān were not revealed. This is because the verse challenges people to produce a *sūrah*, not just separate letters or words. And the shortest *sūrah* in the Qur'ān consists of just three verses. This is why Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad, the students of Abū Ḥanīfah, have said that during prayers one should not recite fewer than three short verses or one long verse equivalent to them, as any part of the Qur'ān less than that may not be inimitable. And Allah knows best.

(37) Anyone who attributes something human to Allah is an infidel.

All those who grasp this point will take heed and refrain from saying things such as the unbelievers say. And they will know that He, in His attributes, is not like human beings.

Having said that the Qur'ān is literally the word of Allah, originating from Him, the author thought it proper to remention that Allah is not like man in any of His attributes. Negation follows affirmation in order to remove the possibility of anthropomorphism. That is, although Allah certainly speaks, His speech does not share the attributes that characterize human speech, for "there is nothing like Allah and He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing" [42:11]. This verse is the best example for anyone to follow who wants to affirm the attributes of Allah and avoid both anthropomorphism and negation. He wants to secure the pure and delicious milk that trickles down from between the excretion of negation and the blood of anthropomorphism. The negator, in fact, worships a void. And the anthropomorphist worships an idol. We will elaborate this point later while commenting on the author's statements, "Anyone who does not avoid both negation and anthropomorphism strays far away and fails to glorify Allah," and "Islam is between negation and anthropomorphism." There is no question that negation is worse than anthropomorphism. We will also discuss that later. The way Allah has described Himself, and the way the Prophet (peace be on him) described Him, contain no anthropomorphism. The attributes of the Creator are as it behooves Him. And the attributes of the created are as it behooves them.

The words, "All those who grasp this point will take heed," mean that if one ponders what the author has said regarding the affirmation of Allah's attributes and the negation of anthropomorphism and its evil consequences, he will understand and not make statements similar to that of the disbelievers.

(38) The seeing of Allah by the people of Paradise is factual, without their vision being all-encompassing and without the manner of their vision being known.

As it states in the Book of our Lord, "Some faces that Day will beam looking towards their Lord" [75:22-23]. The explanation of this is as Allah wills and according to His knowledge. Whatever the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) has said about it and has come down to us through authentic *aḥādīth* will come to pass as he said it and meant it. We do not try to interpret his words according

to our opinions and imaginations. No one is safe in his faith unless he submits completely to Allah (to Whom belongs glory and greatness) and His Messenger (peace be on him) and entrusts the knowledge of things that are ambiguous to the one who knows them.

The Jahmīyyah and the Mu'tazilah deny the beatific vision, as do some of the Khārijīs and Imāmīyyah. But their view is wrong and refuted by the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Those who affirm their belief in the vision constitute the majority of the Muslim nation, including the Companions of the Prophet, their Successors, the *imāms* of Islam whom the community hails as their leaders, the scholars of *ḥadīth*, and all of the theological schools of the Ahl as-Sunnah. The belief in the beatific vision is one of the most important and greatest principles of Islam. It is the goal that those who have worked hard are preparing for. It is this that the competitors are competing for, and only those who have been veiled from their Lord and turned from its gate will refuse it.

From the evidence for it, the author has mentioned the verse, "Some faces that Day will beam looking towards their Lord." This is one of the clearest proofs. But those who are bent upon altering the meaning of the Qur'ānic verses under the guise of *ta'wīl* (reinterpretation) will find various verses on the Hereafter, Paradise, Hell and Judgment quite easy to twist. If anyone is determined to misinterpret a text and give it a meaning which does not fit into the context, it may not be difficult for him to find such a way.

This approach has played havoc with religion and life. This is what the Jews and Christians did with the texts of the Torah and Gospel. Allah has warned us against doing the same. But vicious people have not heeded the warning and have in fact followed in their footsteps. What harm misinterpretation has done to Islam and Muslims! Was not 'Uthmān, may Allah be pleased with him, killed because of a misinterpretation of the texts? Did not the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, the killing of Al-Ḥussayn, and the incidents of Al-Ḥarrah[123] take place on account of it? Did not the Khārijīs, Mu'tazilīs and Rāfiḍīs commit their heresies because of it? And did

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[123]'Uthmān was killed in the year 35 A.H. The battle of the Camel took place at Baṣrah the following year between the army of 'Alī, on the one side, and the army of 'Ā'isha, Ṭalḥah and Az-Zubayr, on the other. The Battle of Ṣiffīn, a place near Ar-Raqqah on the bank of the Euphrates River, took place in the year 37 A.H. Al-Ḥussayn was killed at Karbalah, near Kūfah, on the tenth of Muḥarram, 61 A.H. And in 63 A.H., the army of Yazīd Ibn Mu'āwīyah attacked Madinah and slaughtered men and women in the eastern part of the city, called Ḥarrah, or Ḥarrat Waqim.

not the Muslim nation become divided into seventy sects because of it?

The above-mentioned verse associates looking (naẓar) with the face, which is its proper position. It takes the preposition *ilā* meaning 'towards'. This clearly shows that what is meant in that verse is seeing with the eyes. And since there is no counter-indication that the apparent meaning is not the intended meaning, it is clear that seeing the face of Allah with the eyes is what is meant.

The word naẓar may mean different things according to its use with or without a preposition. When it is used without a preposition, it means 'to wait', as in the verse, "Wait for us (*unẓurūnā*), so that we may borrow some light from you" [57:13]. When it is followed by the preposition *fī* it means 'to think or reflect upon', as in the verse, "Do they not reflect upon (*lam yanẓuru fī*) the sovereignty over the heavens and the earth" [7:185]. However, when it is followed by the preposition *ilā*, it means 'to see with the eyes', as in the verse, "Look at (*unẓuru ilā*) its fruits when it bears fruit" [6:99]. And what if, in addition, the face, which is the place from which one sees, is explicitly mentioned? Ibn Mardawayh recorded through his chain of authorities from Ibn 'Amr that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said about the verse, "Some faces that Day will beam looking towards their Lord" [75:22-23], "The faces will beam due to the radiance and beauty of Allah's face."[124] Al-Ḥassan said, "Faces will look at their Lord and will be brightened by His light." Ibn 'Abbās, as was related by Abū Ṣāliḥ,[125] said, "Looking towards their Lord means that they will look upon the face of their Lord, the Most High." 'Ikrimah said, "Some faces will that Day beam because of the blessing they enjoy. And 'looking towards their Lord means that they will look upon their Lord." He also quoted a similar statement from Ibn 'Abbās. This is the view of all the commentators of the Qur'ān among the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah.

Allah has said, "They will have there all that they wish, and there will be more besides" [50:35]. Aṭ-Ṭabarī mentions that 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib and Anas Ibn Mālik stated that the reference in the verse is to the vision of Allah.[126]

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[124] Aṭ-Ṭabarī has recorded this report in his commentary, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. 29, p. 120. Its chain is very weak. It contains Thuwayr Ibn Abī Fakhtah, about whom it is said that he lied and his *aḥādīth* should not be accepted.

[125] Abū Ṣāliḥ is not reliable according to Ibn 'Adīy.

[126] Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. 26, pp. 173-176.

Similarly, in the verse, "To those who do good there is a goodly reward (*ḥusnah*) and more besides (*zīyādah*)" [10:26], "goodly reward" means Paradise, and "more besides" means looking upon the face of Allah. This is how the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) and his Companions explained that verse. Muslim recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Ṣuhayb that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) recited the verse, "To those who do good there is a goodly reward and more besides," and then said, "When the people of Paradise enter Paradise and the people of Hell enter Hell, a voice will call, 'People of Paradise! Allah has given you a promise which He wishes to fulfill.' They will say, 'What is it? Has He not tilted the balance in our favor, made our faces bright, saved us from the Fire, and entered us into Paradise?' Thereupon Allah will lift the veil and they will look upon Him. He will not give them anything dearer and lovelier than a look at His face. And that is the *zīyādah* (mentioned in the verse)."[127]

This *ḥadīth* has also been recorded by other compilers of *ḥadīth* and has been transmitted through different chains and with different wordings. They all say that "more" in the verse means looking upon the face of Allah. The Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) also explained the verse in a similar fashion. Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī recorded such from a number of them, including Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddiq, Abū Ḥudhayfah, Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī and Ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

Allah also says, "Truly, from that Day they will be veiled from their Lord" [83:15]. Ash-Shāfi'ī and other *imāms* have used this verse as proof of the beatific vision for the people of Paradise. Aṭ-Ṭabarī and others recorded from Al-Muzanī from Ash-Shāfi'ī, and Al-Ḥākim recorded from Al-Aṣamm from Ar-Rabi'a Ibn Sulaymān, who said, "I was with Muḥammad Ibn Idrīs Ash-Shāfi'ī when a letter came to him from As-Sa'īd inquiring as to his opinion about the verse, 'Truly from that Day, they will be veiled from their Lord,' and he said, 'Since some people will incur the wrath of Allah and will not be allowed to see Him, it implies that the friends of Allah will have His pleasure and will be able to see Him.'"[128]

The Mu'tazilah, on the other hand, argue from the verses, "You cannot see me" [7:143], and "No vision can grasp Him" [6:106].

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[127]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 81; At-Tirmidhī, 2555, 3104; Ibn Mājah, 187; Aḥmad, 4:332, 333. The wording of the *ḥadīth* quoted here is that of Ibn Mājah.

[128]Al-Bayhaqī, *Manāqib Ash-Shafi'ī*, ed. by As-Sayyīd Aḥmad Saqar (Cairo: Maktabah Dār at-Turāth, 1391/1971), vol. 1, p. 419.

But the fact is that these verses go against them. Take the first verse. It suggests the possibility of the beatific vision in many ways. First, a person like Moses, whom Allah honored by talking to him and making him His messenger and who knew his Lord more than anyone of his time, cannot be imagined to have requested something which was not possible for him to request. The Mu'tazilah, on the other hand, believe that what he asked for is the greatest impossibility.

Second, Allah did not rebuke Moses for asking for the vision, although when Noah asked for his son to be saved, Allah rebuked him for his request, saying, "I give this counsel to you lest you act like the ignorant" [11:46].

Third, Allah only said to Moses, "You will not see Me." He did not say, "I cannot be seen," "It is impossible to see me," or "I am invisible." The difference between the two sets of answers is clear. Suppose you have a stone in your pocket and someone who thinks it is food begs you for it. The correct response would be, "It is not food." But suppose you did have something edible in your pocket. The correct response then could be, "You will never eat it." Hence, the correct understanding of the verse is that Allah is visible, but Moses was not able to see Him in this world because human faculties are not capable of seeing Him.

Fourth, Allah says, moreover, "Look at the mountain. If it abides in its place, then you will see Me" [7:143]. In other words, if a solid and strong thing like the mountain cannot stand the manifestation of Allah in this world, how can a weak creature like man stand up to it?

Fifth, Allah does have the power to make the mountain abide in its place when He manifests Himself. It was certainly possible, and that is the reason He made the vision contingent on it. Had it been impossible, there would have been no difference between what He said and the words, "If the mountain abides in its place, I will eat, drink and sleep," as these are all the same to the Mu'tazilah.

Sixth, Allah states, "When His Lord manifested His glory on the mountain, He made it as dust" [7:143]. If, as these words say, Allah could manifest Himself to a lifeless thing like a mountain, which is not a being that may perceive reward or punishment, why should He not manifest Himself to His prophets and friends in the Abode of Grace? In fact, what He wanted to teach Moses was that when a mountain could not stand His manifestation, even more so a weaker being like man could not stand it.

Seventh, it is a fact that Allah spoke to Moses, called him and entered into a dialogue with him. Now, if it was possible for anyone to converse with Allah, to speak with Him and to hear from Him

without any intermediary, it should even more so be possible for him to see Him. One cannot deny vision without denying such a conversation. Hence, no wonder that the Mu'tazilah denied that, too.

As for the argument that *lan*[129] in *lan tar'anī* ('You will not see me') rules out the vision forever, even in the Hereafter, it is not correct. *Lan* does not necessarily negate something for all times to come, even if it is followed by a word like *abadan* (forever). Therefore, without the word "forever," it certainly does not imply eternity. For example, Allah has said, "But never (*lan*) will they express such desire" [2:95]; but later says, "Then they will cry out: 'Angel! Let your Lord put an end to us'" [43:77]. Again, if the denial had ruled out the vision forever, it would not have been contingent upon something else. In such cases, which are quite common in the Qur'ān, lan does not negate a thing forever. Allah says, "I will not leave (*lan abraha*) this place until my father permits me" [12:80]. This demonstrates that lan does not perpetuate the negation. Sheikh Jamāl Ad-Dīn Ibn Mālik has written, "Whoever thinks *lan* denies something forever, His view I reject and uphold the contrary.

As for the second verse, "Vision does not grasp Him" [6:106], I will show that it suggests the possibility of vision in a very subtle way. Allah has said these words while praising Himself. And to praise is to affirm something, but to simply negate something is not to affirm anything. Therefore, you cannot praise anybody simply by denying something. When Allah praises Himself with a negation, it implies an affirmation. For example, when He denies slumber or sleep for Himself, it is praise because it implies the perfection of His world-sustaining activity. Similarly, the negation of death implies the perfection of His life; the negation of weariness implies the perfection of His energy; the negation of any partner, wife, son, daughter or assistant implies the perfection of His lordship, divinity and authority; the negation of eating and drinking implies the perfection of His self-sufficiency; the negation of intercession without His permission implies His absolute oneness and autonomy; the negation of injustice implies the perfection of His justice, knowledge and self-sufficiency; the negation of forgetting and ignorance implies the perfection of His knowledge and its all-comprehensiveness; and the negation of any peers implies the perfection of His essences and attributes.

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[129]Implying future negation.

That is why Allah does not praise Himself by simply negating something that does not imply anything positive. The object that is qualified with some want shares that want with non-being; and no one can be perfect that shares something with non-being. The true meaning of the verse, therefore, is that, even though Allah can be seen, He cannot be grasped or encompassed. So the words, "Vision does not grasp Him" [6:106], underlie His greatness, that He is so exalted above everything that none will encompass Him, even though they will see Him. Idrak means 'to comprehend and to encompass'; it is more than simply seeing. The Qur'ān says, "When the two groups saw each other, the people of Moses said, 'We are going to be overtaken (*mudrakūn*). He (Moses) said, 'By no means" [26:61-62]. Moses did not deny being seen (*rū'yah*]. He only denied that they would be overtaken (*idrak*). *Rū'yah* and *idrak* sometimes go together but not always. One can see Allah but cannot grasp Him, just as one can know Him but cannot comprehend Him. This is how the Companions of the Prophet and the *imāms* have understood this verse, as is clear from their comments quoted earlier. But this aspect is not confined only to Allah; the sun which Allah created may be seen but not encompassed by people.

Concerning the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him) and statements of the Companions that suggest beatific vision, they are *mutawātir*.[130] The compilers of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Musnad* and *Sunan* collections have recorded them. Consider the following examples.

Abū Hurayrah narrated that some people asked the Messenger of Allah, "Will we see our Lord on the Day of Judgment?" He answered, "Does it hurt you when you see the full moon?" They said, "No, Messenger of Allah." He then said "Is it difficult for you to see the sun on a cloudless day?" They said, "No, Messenger of Allah." He then said, "You will see Him in the same way." Al-Bukhārī and Muslim recorded this *ḥadīth* with its full text.[131] They have also recorded a similar *ḥadīth* from Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī.[132]

Jarīr Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Bajalī said, "We were sitting with the Prophet (peace be on him) and he looked to the moon of the fourteenth night (a full moon). Then he said, 'You will see your Lord with your eyes just as you see this (moon). You will not have

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[130]See Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ḥādī al-Arwāḥ ilā Bilād al-Afrāḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyyah, n.d.), p. 205.

[131]Al-Bukhārī, *At-Tawḥīd*, 7437; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 182; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4730; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2560; Aḥmad, 2:275, 293, 368, 524.

[132]Al-Bukhārī, 7439; Muslim, 183; Ibn Khūzaymah, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, p. 169, 172, 173; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 818.

to trouble each other in trying to see Him." This *ḥadīth* was also recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[133]

The *ḥadīth* of Ṣuhayb mentioned earlier was recorded by Muslim and others.[134]

In another *ḥadīth*, Abū Mūsā narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "There will be two gardens of silver there (in Paradise), where everything including the utensils will be of silver. And there will be two gardens of gold, where everything including the utensils will be of gold. Nothing will be there to restrain the faithful from seeing their Lord, the Most Blessed and Most High, in the Gardens of Everlasting Bliss except a cloak of glory over His countenance." This was recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[135]

'Adīy Ibn Ḥātim narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "You will certainly meet Allah on the Day you will meet Him. There will be no veil between you and Him, nor an interpreter to interpret. He will say, 'Did I not send you a messenger to deliver My message? You will answer, 'Yes, O Lord. He will say, 'Did I not give you riches and honor you? And you will say, 'Yes, O Lord....'" This *ḥadīth* was recorded by Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.[136]

About thirty Companions[137] have related the *ḥadīth* of beatific vision. Anyone who studies them will know with certainty that the Messenger (peace be upon him) said them. If I had not laid down the condition of being brief in this work, I would have quoted them all; however, anyone who wants to know this subject thoroughly is advised to study them. In addition to the vision of Allah, they also tell of Allah speaking to whom He likes, that He will come to judge the creatures on the Day of Judgment, that He is above the worlds, that He will call them with a voice everyone at a distance will hear, like one who is close, that He will appear (*tajallā*), that He will

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[133]Al-Bukhārī, 554, 573, 4851, 7434, 7435, 7436; Muslim, *Al-Masājid,* 633; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4729; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2554; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 177; Aḥmad, 4:360, 362, 365.

[134]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 81; At-Tirmidhī, 2555, 3104; Ibn Mājah, 187; Aḥmad, 4:332, 333. The wording of the *ḥadīth* quoted earlier was that of Ibn Mājah.

[135]Al-Bukhārī, 4878, 4880, 7444; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 180; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2530; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 186; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 834.

[136]Al-Bukhārī, 1413, 3595; Muslim, 1016, 67; At-Tirmidhī, 2415; Ibn Mājah, 185; Aḥmad, 4:256, 377.

[137]See Ibn Kathīr, *Kitāb an-Nihāyah*, Muḥammad Az-Zaynī, ed. (Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadithah, 1389/1969), vol. 2, pp. 300-303; Al-Ājurī, *Ash-Shari'ah*, Muḥammad Hāmid Al-Fiqī, ed. (Cairo: Maṭba'at as-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyyah, 1369/1950), pp. 264-270; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 3:470-499.

laugh, and so on. All this surely strikes the Jahmīyyah and Mu'tazilah like a lightning bolt.

How can one know the principles of the religion of Islam from sources other than the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger? And how can one interpret the Book of Allah in a way other than how His Messenger and the Companions of His Messenger, in whose language the Qur'ān was revealed, explained it? The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever comments on the Qur'ān simply on the basis of his opinion will take his own seat in the Hell-fire."[138] In another version of the *ḥadīth*, the wording is, "Whoever comments on the Qur'ān without knowledge will take his own seat in the Hell-fire."[139] Abū Bakr was asked about the meaning of *abb* in the verse, "*fakihatan wa abban*" [80:31], and he replied, "If I say anything with regard to the Qur'ān that I do not properly know, what heaven will protect me and what earth would hold me?"

To liken the sight of Allah to the sight of the sun or the moon is not making a likening to Allah; it is simply comparing one with another and not one object with another object. But it contains proof that Allah is above His creation; otherwise, how can one see something without facing it? Anyone who says that we will see Allah but He will not be in any direction should ask himself whether he is not contradicting his reason or if he has something wrong with his ability to reason; otherwise, if he says that Allah will be seen but not in front, behind, to the right, to the left, above or below the viewer, everyone who has unbiased reasoning will refute him.

This is why the Mu'tazilah insist that anyone who denies that Allah is above the world must also deny that He may be seen. They say, "How can it be that He is seen without any direction."

We do not see Him in this life because our vision is not capable of that, not because He cannot be seen. If someone tries to see the sun, he cannot, but not because it cannot be seen but because our eyes are too weak. In the Hereafter, Allah will strengthen the sight

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[138]At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr,* 2952; *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī* [Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabari's commentary on the Qur'ān edited under this title by Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr (Cairo: Dār Al-Ma'ārif, 2nd ed., n.d. The *aḥādīth* mentioned by Ibn Jarīr have been numbered in this edition. Henceforth, this edition will be referred to as *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī* and the *aḥādīth* will be mentioned by their numbers), *ḥadīth* no. 73, 74, 75, 76 and 77. The chain of this *ḥadīth* contains 'Abdul-A'lā Ibn 'Amīr Ath-Tha'labī, who is weak.

[139]At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr,* 2951; Aḥmad, 233, 269, 323, 327. This *ḥadīth* also contains the same weak narrator as the previous narration.

of humans such that they will be able to see Him. That is why, when Allah manifested Himself, "Moses fell down senseless. And when he came to, he said, 'Glory unto You! I turn to You repentant, and I am the first of (true) Believers'" [7:143], because no living being can see You except that he will die. No lifeless being faces You but does tumble down. Similarly, human beings cannot see angels in their true forms, save for those whom Allah helps to do so, such as when He helped our Prophet (peace be upon him) to do so.

Allah says, "They say: 'Why is an angel not sent down to him?' If We did send an angel, the matter would be settled at once" [6:8). More than one of the pious Elders stated while commenting on this verse, "They are not able to see an angel in his real form. If He were to send them an angel, He would make him in human form. Then it would be confusing to them: is he human or an angel? It is, therefore, from the complete blessings of Allah upon us that he sent a messenger to us from among our own kind."

The Mu'tazilah could not force them to accept that proposition until they made them agree that Allah is neither inside the world nor outside it. But the statement of one who says that He is there and can be seen but not in any direction is closer to sound reasoning than the statement of one who says that He exists by Himself but He is not anywhere nor can He be seen.

One can counter the argument of those who deny the vision of Allah, because it implies that Allah is located somewhere, in the following manner. What is meant by direction? Is it a being or a non-being? If you mean by it a being, then your argument is that what is not in some being cannot be seen. But this premise is not proven; in fact, it is a false argument, for the surface of the world can be seen even though it is not in another world. If you say that it is a non-being, then the minor premise of your argument is not true, for we do not accept that Allah is not somewhere in that sense.

How can one talk about the basis of the religion when one is not taking his thoughts from the Book and the Sunnah, but instead is deriving them from the statement of a human being; or if one claims that he is taking it from the Book of Allah but does not take the explanation of the Book of Allah from the *ḥadīth* of the Messenger, nor looks to them or to what the Companions and their followers stated that have been narrated to us through trustworthy transmission? Those people did not just transmit the wording of the Qur'ān; they transmitted both its wording and its meaning. They did not learn the Qur'ān as a child learns it; instead, they learned it with its meaning. Whoever does not follow their methodology, but speaks only from his own opinion, and whoever speaks according

to his opinion or what he thinks is Allah's religion, without taking it from the Book and the Sunnah, is a sinner, even if what he says is correct. But whoever takes his statements from the Book and the Sunnah is to be rewarded even if he makes a mistake; though if he is correct, his reward is to be doubled.

And the author said, "The seeing of Allah by the people of Paradise is factual." It seems that he is limiting the seeing to the people of Paradise and denying it for others. There is no doubt that the people of Paradise will see their Lord in Paradise. Similarly, they will see Him when the people are gathered before they enter Paradise. That is confirmed in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).[140] The following verse also points to that, "The salutation on the Day they will meet Him will be 'Peace'" [33:44]. There is a difference of opinion concerning the seeing by the people who are gathered on the Day of Judgment. There are three opinions on this matter:

1) Only the Believers will see Him.
2) All the people will see Him, Believers and disbelievers, but then He will be veiled from the disbelievers and they will never see Him again after that.
3) Along with the Believers, the hypocrites will also see Him, but not the other unbelievers.

There is a similar difference of opinion concerning those whom Allah will speak to on the Day of Judgment.

The *ummah* has agreed that no one can see Allah with his eyes in this world. There is no dispute over this question except for the case of the Prophet (peace be upon him) alone. Some people deny that he saw Allah with his eyes, while others affirm his seeing. Qāḍī 'Ayāḍ discussed in his book, *Ash-Shifā*, the difference of opinion among the Companions and later scholars concerning this topic. He mentioned that the Prophet's wife, 'Ā'ishah, denied that he had seen Allah with his eyes. She told Masruq, when he had asked her, "Did Muḥammad (peace be upon him) see his Lord?" She said, "My hair stands on end from what you have said." Then she said, "Whoever tells you that Muḥammad saw his Lord has truly stated a falsehood."[141] 'Ayāḍ states, "Many people hold the same view as 'Ā'isha. It is the well-known opinion of Ibn Mas'ūd and Abū Hurayrah, although the latter has been reported to have affirmed the opposite. The opinion that the Prophet did not see Allah and that no

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[140]Such *aḥādīth* were presented earlier in this section.

[141]Al-Bukhārī, 4855, 7380; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 177; At-Tirmidhī, 3068, 3228; and Aḥmad, 6:49-50.

one can see Him in this life is held by a number of scholars of *ḥadīth*, jurists and theologians. It is recorded from Ibn 'Abbās that he said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did see his Lord with his eyes.[142] But 'Ata' narrated from him that he said he saw Him with his heart.[143] Concerning whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw Him with his eyes, there is nothing definitive nor is there a clear text. People have referred to the two verses of Sūrat An-Najm concerning this matter. But what they state is debatable and may be cited for either view. As for the *aḥādīth*, there is nothing clear or definitive in them."[144]

The above is what Qāḍī 'Ayāḍ has stated and it is the truth. In principle, the seeing of Allah in this life is not ruled out. If it were impossible, Moses would not have requested it. But there is no clear text that states that the Prophet saw Him with his eyes. In fact, there are some narrations that show that he did not see Him. For example, Muslim recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Abū Dharr, who said, "I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), 'Did you see your Lord?' and he said, 'He is Light; how could I see him?'"[145]

And another narration states, "I saw light." Muslim also recorded a *ḥadīth* from Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī who said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed us and told us five things: Truly Allah does not sleep, nor does it behoove Him to sleep; He fixes everyone's share, large or small; the deeds of the night are raised before Him before the deeds of the day; and the deeds of the day are raised to Him before the deeds of the night; and His veil is light - and in one narration "fire". And if He were to remove it, the splendor of His countenance would burn everything that His eyes would fall upon."[146] Therefore, and Allah knows best, the meaning of his statement to Abū Dharr, "I saw light," means he saw the veil. Furthermore, the statement, "He is light; how could I see Him?" means that the light which is His veil prevented him from seeing Allah. That is, "How could I see Him when the light of the

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[142]Al-Bukhārī, 4176; At-Tirmidhī, 3134.

[143]Muslim, 176; At-Tirmidhī, 3281; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 910-911.

[144]Qāḍī 'Ayāḍ, *Ash-Shifā fī Ta'rīf Ḥuqūq Al-Muṣṭafa* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyyah, n.d.), pp. 195-202.

[145]Muslim, 178. The words in Aḥmad, 5:147, are, "I saw Him as a light; how could I have seen Him?"

[146]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 179; Ibn Mājah, 195; Ibn Ḥibban, 266; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, op cit., pp. 180-181; Ibn Mundah, *Al-Īmān* ('Alī Ibn Muḥammad Al-Faqihī, ed.; Madinah: Islamic University Press, 1st edition, 1401/1981), *ḥadīth* no. 775, 776, 777, 778, 779.

veil was between me and Him preventing me from seeing Him." That is explicit concerning the negation of his seeing. And Allah knows best. 'Uthmān Ibn Sa'īd Ad-Dārimī relates the agreement of the Companions on this point.

It is more important to us to affirm his seeing of Gabriel than his seeing of his Lord, because although the seeing of his Lord is much greater and exalted, his position as prophet does not rest upon that seeing whatsoever.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī has stated, "without their vision being all-encompassing and without the manner of their vision being known," that is, because of His complete majesty and sublimity, eyes will see Him but will not be able to grasp or encompass Him, just as one can know Him but cannot grasp Him. Allah says, "No vision will grasp Him" [6:103]; and, "They will not encompass Him with their knowledge" [20:110].

As for his statement, "The explanation of this is as Allah wills and according to His knowledge... We do not try to interpret his words according to our opinions and imaginations," that is, as the Mu'tazilah have done with the texts of the Book and the Sunnah concerning visions of Him. They have distorted the words of Allah and the words of His Messenger. The correct interpretation is what is in accordance with what is in the Sunnah; and the incorrect interpretation contradicts it. The interpretation which is not supported by the context or suggested by evidence found in the text cannot be the intention of its Speaker, Who knows how to express His words clearly and wants to guide people. Had He meant something which is not apparent from the words, He would have put some clues in the text to indicate their meaning, so that nobody would be misled or confused. Allah has said that His words are clear, precise and full of guidance. But if He means something which is not apparent from His words, or puts in something that may indicate that He means other than what comes easily to every mind, His language cannot be said to be clear and precise. The purpose of interpretation is not to suggest something new but to expose what the author meant by his words.

Many people miss this point. Interpretation is an effort to understand the intention of the speaker in his words. When you say, "This is the meaning of the words," you are saying that this is the meaning that the speaker had in mind. If it does not correspond to what the speaker meant, you are wrongly imputing something to the speaker.

The intent of the speaker may be known through different means:

1) He may explicitly state his meaning.

2) He may use words whose meanings are well known and avoid saying anything that may suggest that he does not mean their meanings. This is strengthened by adjoining the words to statements that make what he is saying abundantly clear. Allah's saying, "God spoke to Moses directly" [4:163], and, "You will see your Lord with open eyes as you see the sun at noon when there are no clouds,"[147] are so clear that anyone who hears them will know what the speaker means by them. If he states what the speaker means, and what his words clearly state and imply, and what other evidence further support, he tells the truth. But if he interprets the words to mean what they do not imply, and what is not indicated by other evidence, his claim that what he is saying is what the speaker means is false; it is nothing but a subjective interpretation or wishful imagining.

The fact is that if someone says,, "We interpret it this way," or "We construe it this way," he is giving the word a meaning different from what has been intended. If an opponent objects to his interpretation, and he fails to meet his objection, he will say, as people generally do, "I have understood the word in a non-literal sense."

Someone might say, "But the interpretation has another meaning that you have not mentioned." That is, if a word cannot be taken in its literal sense, it cannot be regarded as meaningless; rather, we take the word in its metaphorical sense, that is, in a sense it implies but not what it originally meant. The response is that when you say that this is what the word means, you are stating that this is what the speaker intends by it. That may be either correct or incorrect, as was stated earlier. It is obviously impossible for the speaker to intend something which is contradictory to the real and apparent meaning of his words and not make it clear to his listeners that that is what he means.

Furthermore, (this probability is even less probable when) he chooses language which underlines that the apparent meaning is intended. We do not deny that a speaker may not intend what his words mean literally, but this happens when the speaker deliberately wants to be vague or wants to confuse the listener. But we do not accept that he would mean the opposite of what he said when at the same time he was intending to be clear and manifest and have his intent understood. This would be all the more unacceptable if he went on strengthening the apparent meaning of his words by

[147] A *ḥadīth* in the same sense occurs in Al-Bukhārī, 4581; Muslim, 183.

including words that precluded a metaphorical interpretation and he did so repeatedly and even used similes.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī has said, "No one is safe in his faith unless he submits completely to Allah (to Whom belongs glory and greatness) and His Messenger (peace be on him) and entrusts the knowledge of things that are ambiguous to one who knows them." That is, one should submit to the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah and refrain from raising doubts and making wrong interpretations. One should avoid saying that reason contradicts this or that narration, or that reason should be allowed to prevail when narrations conflict with it, as reason is the basis of narrated reports and if there is any contradiction between them reason takes precedence. Actually, that would never occur, but it may seem to some people that it occurs. If there seems to be a conflict between reason and a narration, and the tradition is authentic, then what is claimed to be rationally true is definitely not true. If the person investigated the matter, that would be made clear to him. On the other hand, if the tradition is not authentic, there is no question of conflict. In fact, it is inconceivable that there could be a conflict between rational truth and an authentic tradition.

The maxim, "whenever there is a conflict between reason and tradition, reason should be allowed to prevail," is not true. When there is a contradiction between the two, we cannot affirm both of them, nor can we disregard both of them, for one of the contraries must be true. Nor can we prefer reason over the traditions, for reason has demonstrated the validity of the traditions and has proven the necessity of accepting the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him). If we reject the narrated reports, we reject the conclusion of reason. If we reject the conclusions of reason, then it cannot be accepted as something that can contradict the narrated reports, because what is not evidence cannot contradict anything. Hence, preferring reason leads to not preferring it. Hence, it is not permissible to consider it superior. It is reason that points out the truthfulness and correctness of what has been transmitted (*samī'*). The state of what has been transmitted must be in accordance with what has been proven by reason. If it is permissible for the guide to it to be incorrect, the transmitted evidence will be considered incorrect. Therefore, reason must be a correct guide and evidence. If it were not so, it could not be followed in any case, not to speak of putting it prior to transmitted reports. In that case, putting reason before transmitted reports then becomes an insult to reason itself.[148]

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[148]That is, since reason is the thing that has proven that transmitted reports take

One must submit completely to the Messenger (peace be upon him), fulfill his commands, believe in his words and bear witness to their truth, without opposing them as untrue or doubtful based on false reasoning called rational truths, or prefer over them erroneous concepts that the human mind has spun. One should submit only to his authority, obey only his commands, and believe only in him in the same way that one must worship only his Sender and surrender to Him alone, looking only to His mercy and putting one's trust only in Him.

These are two aspects of *tawḥīd* and the person will not be saved from the Hell-fire unless he possesses both of them: the belief in the oneness of the Sender and belief in the distinctive following of the Messenger. One should not appeal to any other authority nor accept any other rule. One must not make compliance with his commands or belief in his words contingent on one's agreement with the teachings of his teacher, mentor, *imām*, group or sect that he respects. One should not say that one will believe in his words only when these people approve of them – as then he would actually be submitting to them – or ignore his words and commands, or change their meanings under the guise of interpretation. It is far better to meet Allah with all kinds of sins – save associating partners with Him – than to meet Him in that condition.

When one hears an authentic *ḥadīth*, he should consider it as if he is hearing it from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. Is it permissible for him, then, to defer his assent or compliance until he makes sure that is in agreement with the views and the doctrines of some people or sect? Instead, it is incumbent upon him to put his words into action immediately without any hesitation. He must not hesitate to accept it because it contradicts someone else's view; on the contrary, he should refuse to accept anyone else's opinion when it does not agree with the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Neither should he oppose the Prophet's statements with analogies. Let him destroy every analogy and accept the words of the Prophet. Nor may he change the meaning of the Prophet's words to agree with the ideas their protagonists call rational; otherwise, he will be among the ignorant and prevented from what is correct. Assenting to the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) may never be made contingent upon their agreement with the views of anybody, no matter who that person may be.

Imām Aḥmad said that Anas Ibn Iyādh narrated that Abū Ḥazm narrated on the authority of Amr Ibn Shu'ayb, on the authority of

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precedence.

his father, from his grandfather, who said, "My brother and I sat in a gathering that was more beloved to me than red camels. When we arrived, we saw that some elder Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were sitting at one of the doors to his house. We did not like to sit between them and separate them, so we sat in a corner by ourselves. They were discussing a verse of the Qur'ān. The discussion became heated and they raised their voices. The Prophet (peace be upon him) came out in anger. His face was red. He threw dirt at them and said, "Be quiet, people. Because of this peoples before you were destroyed. They differed with their prophets and set one verse of their books against another. Truly, the Qur'ān has not been revealed for one part of it to oppose another, but it was revealed such that one part of it confirms the other. What you know of it, apply it. And concerning what you do not know of it, refer it to one who does know it."[149]

Allah has unequivocally forbidden speech about Him not based on proper knowledge. He says, "Say: The things that my Lord has forbidden are shameful deeds, open or secret, sins and trespasses against truth, associating partners with Allah for whom He has given no authority, and to say things about Allah of which you have no knowledge" [7:33]. Allah also says, "Follow not that whereof you have no knowledge" [17:36]. The servant of Allah must consider what Allah sent His messengers with and what He revealed in His books as the truth that he must follow. He must believe that it is the truth and correct. The statements of the rest of mankind are to be compared in their light. If such statements are in agreement with what they say, they are true; if they differ from what the prophets and revealed books say, they are false. If one is not certain whether they are in agreement or disagreement, as perhaps the meaning of the statement of a person is ambiguous or if one understands the meaning but does not know if the Messenger said anything that may confirm or deny it, then he must hesitate and not speak without knowledge. Knowledge is what is confirmed by evidence. Beneficial knowledge is what the Messenger (peace be upon him) brought. It is true that there is some knowledge that the Messenger did not convey but is related to the matters of this world, such as medicine, mathematics and agriculture. But as for matters related to

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[149] Aḥmad, 2:181, 185, 195, 196; 'Abdur-Razzāq As-San'ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, Ḥabīb Ar-Raḥmān Al-Azamī, ed. (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1392/1972), *ḥadīth* no. 20367; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 25. Its chain is *ḥasan*. Muslim, *Al-'Ilm*, 2666, is similar to it.

the divine and to religion, that knowledge is to be taken from the Messenger and no one else.

(39) The foundation of Islam is not made firm except with the support of unreserved assent and submission to Allah.

This statement is an example of a metaphor. The physical foot is not made firm unless it is supported by something. What he means to say is that Islam is not confirmed for one who does not submit to the words of the two revelations (the Qur'ān and Sunnah), does not bow to their commands without questioning their wisdom or does not oppose them with one's one ideas or views. Al-Bukhārī recorded that Imām Muḥammad Ibn Shihāb Az-Zuhrī said, "The message comes from Allah. It is the responsibility of the Messenger (peace be upon him) to convey the message, and it is encumbent upon us to submit to it." This is a concise, encompassing statement on this matter.

The best simile given concerning human reasoning and the transmitted texts is the following. Human reason, with respect to the transmitted texts, is like an ignorant, common follower compared to the scholar who can make *ijtihād*. In fact, it is much less than that because it is possible for the commoner to become a scholar but it is not possible for the scholar to become a messenger-prophet. If the common follower knows of a scholar and directs another commoner to him, and then the scholar and the commoner who pointed him out differ about a matter, the second commoner who asked the question must follow the statement of the scholar and not the statement of the one who pointed him out to him. If the commoner who pointed him out were to say, "The correct opinion is mine and not that of the scholar because I am the source for your knowledge of the scholar. If you take his statement over mine, you are disparaging the source by which you knew he was a scholar. Therefore, the reproach must be in the secondary matter (the scholar)." The commoner who asked the question should tell him, "When you bore witness that he was a scholar and pointed him out, you bore witness that he is to be followed and not you. Therefore, my following you in that knowledge was for something particular; it does not mean that I have to agree with you on everything. And your mistake in your disagreement with the scholar, who is more knowledgeable than you, does not necessarily mean that you were mistaken in your knowledge that he is a scholar." That is even given the fact that he knows that the scholar is capable of making a mistake.

Human reason testifies that the Prophet (peace be upon him) cannot make a mistake when it comes to communicating Allah's message. It is not permissible for him to make a mistake in that area. Therefore, what he says must be submitted to, accepted completely and put into practice. We know, as an obligation from the religion of Islam, that if a man were to say to the Messenger, "This Qur'ān that you are reciting to us and the wisdom that you have come with contain lots of things that contradict what we know with our minds. We know with our knowledge your sincerity and honesty by our reasoning. If we accepted everything that you say while it contradicts what our mind says, that would be disparaging our knowledge with which we confirm what you say. Therefore, we believe that there is some contradiction in your words and we turn away from them and do not accept them as guidance or knowledge," that man would not be a Believer in what the Messenger brought and the Messenger would not accept that from him. In fact, if that were permissible, then anyone could disbelieve in anything that the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought. Minds are of different levels and lots of doubts exist. Devils continue to cast suspicions into people. Therefore, everyone could say something like the above concerning what the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded or said.

But Allah says, "The Messenger's duty is only to communicate the message clearly" [24:54]; and, "What is the mission of the messengers but to communicate the message clearly" [16:35]. Also, "We sent not a messenger except to teach in the language of his people, in order to make things clear to them. Now Allah leaves astray those whom He pleases, and guides whom He pleases" [14:4]; "There has come to you from Allah a light and a perspicuous Book" [5:17]; "*Ḥā Mīm*. By the Book that makes things clear" [44:1-2]; "These are the verses of the perspicuous Book" [12:1]; "It is not a tale invented, but a confirmation of what went before it, a detailed exposition of all things, and a Guide and a Mercy to any such as believe" [12:111]; "We have sent down to you the Book explaining all things, a Guide and a Mercy, and glad tidings to Muslims" [16:89]. There are many more verses of this nature in the Qur'ān.

Concerning belief in Allah and the Hereafter, either the Messenger spoke what demonstrates the truth, or he did not. The latter is ruled out. If he spoke what leads to the truth while using terms that are not clear or are ambiguous, he would not have conveyed the message clearly. But the best of all generations have witnessed that he did convey the message. Allah, too, has borne witness against them in a great place. Therefore, whoever claims

that the Prophet did not convey the message clearly in matters related to the basics of the religion has made a false accusation against the Prophet (peace be upon him).

(40) He Who seeks knowledge that has been barred from him, and whose intellect is not prepared to surrender, will be veiled from a pure understanding of Allah's unity, clear knowledge and correct faith.

This is an elaboration of the earlier point along with a warning that one should not discuss the principles of the faith or any other aspect of the religion without proper knowledge. Allah says, "Pursue not that of which you have no knowledge; for every act of hearing, seeing or feeling in the heart will be asked about (on the Day of Reckoning)" [17:36]; "Yet among men there are such as dispute about Allah without knowledge, and follow every evil one obstinate in rebellion. About the evil one it is decreed that whoever turns to him for friendship, he will lead him astray and guide him to the penalty of the Fire" [22:2-3]; "And yet, there is among men such a one who disputes about Allah, without knowledge, without Guidance and without a Book of Enlightenment, disdainfully bending his side in order to lead men astray from the path of Allah. For him is disgrace in this life, and on the Day of Judgment, We will make him taste the penalty of the burning Fire" [22:8-9]; "And who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts devoid of guidance from Allah? For Allah guides not people given to wrong-doing" [28:60]; and, "They follow nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire, even though there has already come to them guidance from their Lord" [53:23]. And there are other verses that point to the same meaning.

Abū Umāmah Al-Bahilī narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "The people who have the guidance of Allah do not stray unless they indulge in intellectual disputation," and then he read the verse, "They set this forth to you only by way of disputation" [43:58]. At-Tirmidhī recorded this *ḥadīth* and called it *hasan* (good).[150]

'Ā'ishah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "The most detestable people in the sight of Allah are those

[150]At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr,* 3250; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 48; Aḥmad, 5:252, 256; At-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 8067. At-Tirmidhī rated the *ḥadīth ḥasan*, and Al-Ḥakīm called it *ṣaḥīḥ*. (See *Al-Mustadrak*, 2:447-448.)

who dispute and quarrel." This was recorded in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* (of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim).[151]

No doubt, anyone who does not submit completely to the Messenger has some shortcoming in his *tawḥīd*, as he speaks according to his own opinion and desires or he follows somebody else's opinion or desire rather than the guidance from Allah. The shortcoming in his *tawḥīd* is by the same amount that he departs from what the Messenger brought. In those matters, he has taken a god other than Allah. Allah says, "Do you see such a one who takes for his god his own desires and impulses?" [25:43]. That is, he is a servant to what his own soul desires.

Truly evil has spread in this world from three main groups of people. As 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak said:

> Sin, I know, kills the heart,
> and its perpetuation defiles man.
> Avoid sin, you will revive the heart,
> Defy the self, you will secure happiness.
> Three people destroy religion:
> kings, corrupt theologians and monks.

Evil rulers dishonor the Shari'ah by pursuing wrong policies and replacing its just laws with their own, unjust regulations. They prefer them to the rule of Allah and His Messenger. Corrupt theologians – they are the ones that violate the Shari'ah – with their opinions and false logic, they allow what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden and vice-versa, they neglect what the Shari'ah accepts and vice-versa, they make general what the law has made specific and vice-versa, and so on. The monks or hermits are the ignorant Ṣūfis who turn away from the realities of the faith and law. Instead they turn to their mystical experiences, ecstacies, imaginations and Satanic revelations. They construct a religion that Allah has not authorized and they deny His religion that came from the tongue of His Prophet (peace be upon him). They turn away from the realities of faith due to Satanic deception and egotistical desires.

This first group says that if administrative expedience conflicts with the law (*shar'*), administrative expedience takes precedence. And the other groups say that if human reasoning conflicts with what has been transmitted, human reasoning takes precedence. And

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[151]Al-Bukhārī, Al-Maẓalīm, 2457; At-*Tafsīr,* 4253; *Al-Aḥkām*, 7188; Muslim, *Al-'Ilm,* 2668; At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr,* 2976; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Qudat*, 8:248; Aḥmad, 6:55, 62, 205.

the people of mystical experiences say that if there is a conflict between mystical experiences and manifestations and the literal meaning of the law, mystical experiences and manifestations come first

Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī (may Allah have mercy on him) wrote in his book, *Iḥyā 'Ulūm ad-Dīn*, which is one of his best books or perhaps his best book:

> If you ask if the knowledge of disputation and speculative theology is blameworthy, like astrology, or if it is permissible or recommended, you should know that people have taken extreme positions on this question. Some say that it is heresy and is forbidden. For a servant of Allah to meet Allah having committed every sin except polytheism is better for him than to meet Allah knowing speculative theology. Some say it is obligatory, either upon the community as a whole or upon individuals themselves, and that learning it is one of the best deeds and one of the best ways to get closer to Allah. It is the fulfillment of the science of *tawḥīd* and a defense of Allah's religion. Those who say it is forbidden include Ash-Shāfi'ī, Mālik, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Sufyān and the leaders of the scholars of *ḥadīth* from the early predecessors.

After quoting their words extensively, he concludes that there is a consensus of opinion on the subject among the scholars of *ḥadīth* from the Salaf that the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew their faith better than anyone else and were most competent to state it, but did not enter into these subjects; they feared that it would lead to evil. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had warned them, "Doomed are those who unnecessarily enter into hairsplitting and unnecessary subtleties."[152]

These scholars also argue that if theological formulations were part of the faith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have ordered them first and foremost. He would have shown them the way and would have praised their experts.

Then Al-Ghazālī mentions the rest of their arguments and presents the arguments of the other side. Finally, he says:

> If you ask what my conclusion is I will answer in some detail. There is some benefit and some harm (to such sciences). It may at times be permitted, at times commended, and at times obligatory, just as it may at times be undesirable and at times forbidden. As for its harmful aspects, it creates doubts,

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[152]Muslim, *Al-'Ilm*, 2670; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4608; Aḥmad, 1.386.

> subjects faith to discussion, removes conviction and offers instead only inconclusive arguments which hardly satisfy people. In addition, it injects harmful beliefs into the mind, builds up emotions in their favor, and leads to insistence on them. This is, however, due to the prejudice that theological controversy generates.
>
> As for the benefits of *kalām* (speculative theology), it is generally believed that it reveals truth and makes us know things as they are, but this is not true. *Kalām* does not deliver that good; it rather conceals and misleads than reveals and guides. If you had heard these same words from a *ḥadīth* scholar or a Hashawī,[153] you could have said that people who do not know a thing usually condemn it. But these are the words of a person who had mastered *kalām* and fathomed its depths, who ranks among its leading exponents, and is no less versed in other disciplines. It is he who is saying that *kalām* does not offer truth. The most that it does is define and analyze issues and work out the implications of different views, but this is rare.[154]

The statements of others like him are clear proofs. The pious predecessors did not disapprove of *kalām* simply because it was new terminology for old truths, like terminologies for other sciences, or because it advanced rational arguments to establish truth and refute untruth. They condemned it because it expounded ideas which are false and contradict the Qur'ān and Sunnah and correct sciences. The road that the theologians take does not lead to truth, and the method they employ is too lengthy and of little use. It is like the meat of an emaciated camel which is placed on top of a trackless mountain that is difficult to climb and in addition not good to secure. If there is anything good in the *kalām*, it has already been stated in the Qur'ān in a far better manner. *Kalām* does nothing more than prolong the discussion or complicate the issue. As a poet once said:

> If it were not for the competition for this world,
> the books of debate, Al-Mugnī and Al-'Amād would not
> have been written
> by their claim they are solving difficult questions;
> and because of the books that were written,
> the problems became even more difficult to solve.

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[153] The Hashawīyyah are extreme literalists in their understanding of texts, and gross anthropomorphists, attributing a body to Allah.

[154] Al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā *'Ulūm ad-Dīn* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafa Al-Bābī Al-Ḥalabī, 1358/1939), vol. 1, pp. 94-97.

They claim that they resolved doubts and put an end to misconceptions, but anyone familiar with it knows that it only added to them.

It is inconceivable that one cannot reach the truth, guidance, knowledge and certainty in the Book of Allah and the words of His Messenger, yet he can find it in the words of those perplexed theologians. In fact, we must take what Allah and His Messenger stated as the source and beginning point. We must reflect upon and understand their meanings and know their proofs and evidence, whether it be rational or super-rational. We should then consider the supporting or dissenting statements people make, analyze their ideas and ascertain their possible interpretations. Then, what agrees with what the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated we accept; and what does not agree with it we reject.

Kalām operates with a number of terms, such as compound, body, space, substance, dimension, matter, accident, and so on. None of these words occurs in the Qur'ān or Sunnah in the sense in which theologians use them, nor have they been used in those senses in ordinary language; theologians use them in senses different from their common meanings. Hence, it is necessary for them to be explained in common language and then compared with the arguments and concepts that the Qur'ān has advanced. In this way, we will be able to find out what is true in *kalām* and what is false.

Take, for example, the term *tarkīb* (composition). It has many meanings.

First, it may mean to form something out of two or more different things. This is called *tarkīb mazj* (complex composition). An example is an animal being composed of the four elements, having various parts and limbs. It is obvious that composition in this sense is not applicable to Allah. When we ascribe different attributes of perfection, like transcendence, it does not mean that Allah is a composite being in this sense.

Second, composition may mean combining two things by placing them side by side. This is called *tarkīb al-jawār* (joining). An example is the placing of the two parts of a door side by side. For certain, Allah is not a combination of attributes in this sense.

Third, it may mean forming a compound out of particles of the same kind, called atoms.

Fourth, it may be a combination of matter and form, for example, making a ring out of silver, the shape of the ring being its form and silver being its matter. Theologians believe that a body is a

combination of atoms, and they enter into useless discussions about whether atoms combine in twos, fours, sixes, eights or sixteens.

It is clear that composition in these last two meanings does not apply to the attributes of Allah, Who transcends the world. Let it also be clear that a body is not necessarily a combination of atoms, and the definition of the body which theologians give is simply arbitrary. For a detailed discussion of this point, however, one should refer to the relevant works.

Fifth, composition may refer to the combination of essence and attributes. Theologians call this *tarkīb* but they do so only in order to deny Allah's attributes. But in this sense, the term is simply their fabrication; it is not a part of language, nor is it found in the Qur'ān or Sunnah. There is no sanction for this use, and we do not have to accept it. Even if we grant the term and allow them to use it in the context of Allah's attributes, we will say that it is not the word but the meaning which is of importance. You may give it any name you like, but you should realize that the ruling concerning it is not passed on words alone without taking into consideration their meaning. If you want to call milk "wine", it would not be prohibited simply based on that nomenclature.

Sixth, *tarkīb* may refer to a combination of essence and existence. Our mind imagines that they are two different things, but in reality they are not. Can we get essence (dhāt) divested of its existence or existence stripped of its essence? This is impossible. Theologians have debated the question whether the essence of Allah is His existence or different from it and have thus put forward many senseless ideas. The best among them have abstained from saying one thing or the other and have been left skeptical. Many times it is through analysis that erroneous ideas vanish.

Their root cause of error is their turning away from the words of Allah and His Messenger, and their turning to the ideas of the Greeks and other nations. Such people are called *ahl al-kalām* (speculative theologians) because they come up with truths that were not unknown before, or advance ideas which seldom avail, or give a rational demonstration of truths that we can perceive through our senses.

This is not to deny, however, that some of their arguments may be useful, particularly those which they have advanced against the sophists. However, whoever proffers ideas, ignoring the text of the Qur'ān and Sunnah or in opposition to said texts, behaves just like Iblīs, who did not submit to Allah's command. Instead, he said, "I am better than he (Adam); you created me from fire, and him from clay" [7:12]. But Allah says, "He who obeys the Messenger, obeys

Allah; but if anyone turns away, We have not sent you to watch over their (evil) deeds" [4:80]. Allah also says, "Say: If you love Allah, then follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins, for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful" [3:31]. Also, "But no, by your Lord, they can have no (real) faith until they make you judge in all disputes between them and find in their souls no resistance against your decision, but accept them with the fullest conviction" [4:65]. Allah has thus vowed that they would not be true Muslims until they made the Prophet (peace be upon him) the arbiter, accepted his verdict happily and submitted to him in complete submission.

(41) He sways (*yatadhabdhab*) between faith and disbelief, confirmation and denial, and acceptance and rejection. He will be subject to vain suggestions, perplexed and lost, neither a sincere Believer nor an open denier.

Yatadhabdhab means 'puzzled' and 'undecided'. This is the characteristic of all those who ignore the Qur'ān and Sunnah and indulge in blameworthy *kalām*, or try to combine it with the Qur'ān and Sunnah by interpreting the texts in the light of their views or the views of others whenever there is a conflict between them. In the end, they are confused, lost and full of doubt. Ibn Rushd Al-Hafīẓ, who was one of the most knowledgeable of philosophers, wrote in *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*, "Who has written anything in metaphysics that is to be treasured?" Al-Āmidī, the top thinker of his time, noted that he could not overcome his doubts on major issues. Al-Ghazālī likewise expressed his dissatisfaction with theology, gave it up and took up the study of *ḥadīth*. At the time of his death, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Al-Bukhārī was in his hands. Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar Ar-Rāzī wrote in a book on the varieties of pleasure:

> Reason ends in a blind valley,
> and the philosopher goes nothing but astray.
> Our souls have never been at peace with our bodies,
> We got nothing in the world except unhappiness.
> The best we achieved in our pursuits
> is nothing except "It is said," and "They said."
> How many great men and great nations
> perished and disappeared in no time?
> Many men rose higher than mountains, but
> vanished in the end, while the mountains remained.

Ar-Rāzī also said:

> I have pondered the methods of theology and philosophy. They lead nowhere. The best method is that of the Qur'ān. When it wants to affirm something, it says, for example, "(Allah) the Gracious is firmly established on the Throne" [20:5], or "To Him rise all words of purity" [35:10]. But when it wants to negate something, it says, "There is nothing whatsoever like Him" [35:11], or "They will not encompass Him in their knowledge" [20:110]. Whoever passes through the experience I have passed through will surely come to the same conclusion I have reached.

Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdul-Karīm Ash-Shahristānī likewise expressed his disappointment with the philosophers and theologians. They get nothing, he said, except bewilderment and remorse. His words are:

> By Allah! I have visited all the academies,
> and seen everyone in these high places.
> But I found none except with his chin
> In his hands in wonder, or gnashing his teeth in regret.

Abū Ma'ālī Al-Juwaynī said, "Friends, avoid *kalām*. Had I known the end *kalām* has brought me to, I would not have engaged in it." At the time of his death, he said, "I entered the deep waters of *kalām* and left the sciences of Islam. People warned me against it. Now, if Allah does not have mercy on Ibn Al-Juwaynī and save him, he is doomed. Let everyone know that I die in the faith of my mother." Another narration says, "in the religion of the old women of Nishapur."

Shams ad-Dīn Al-Khusrushahī, the most distinguished student of Fakhr ad-Dīn Ar-Rāzī, replying to a question from a learned visitor about his faith, said, "I believe in what the rest of the Muslims believe." The questioner further asked, "Are you convinced and fully satisfied with it?" He nodded and said, "I thank Allah for that blessing. By Allah, I do not know what I am to believe. By Allah, I do not know what I am to believe. By Allah, I do not know what I am to believe." And then he cried until his beard was wet.

Ibn Abī Al-Ḥadid, the famous Iraqi litterateur, said:

> O bundle of mistaken views!
> I passed my whole life in your pursuit
> but got naught but bewilderment.

Many have wandered in your valley
And got naught but toil and trouble.
The curse of Allah be on those
who claim they are famous thinkers.
They are surely wrong, and what they claim
They have achieved is beyond the power of man.

On his deathbed, Al-Khunjī said, "The only thing that I learned from my studies is that the possible needs something to bring it into existence. But need is something negative. Woe is me! I am dying, but I have not been able to know anything positive."

Another theologian said, "I lie in bed, put a blanket over my face, and pit one argument against another until dawn. But I never reach a conclusion."

Whoever reaches that state and is not then enveloped in the mercy of Allah must become a heretic. Abū Yūsuf said, "Whoever tries to understand the religion through *kalām* turns into a heretic just as the one who tries to make money through alchemy turns into a pauper, or the one who seeks strange (*gharīb*) *aḥādīth* lands in untruth." Ash-Shāfi'ī said, "In my opinion, the exponents of *kalām* should be flogged with branches and shoes and taken through villages and towns with someone announcing, 'Come and see, this is the punishment for ignoring the Qur'ān and Sunnah and indulging in *kalām*.'" He also said, "I have studied the books of *kalām* and I wonder how a Muslim could utter the things which they contain. It would be far better for a man to meet Allah with everything He has forbidden – with the exception of ascribing partners to Allah – than for him to meet Allah with *kalām*."

One can find many such theologians at the end of their lives returning to the faith of old women, affirming what they believe, and recanting their theological subtleties which conflict with the faith they had used to be so certain about. Afterwards they discovered the falsehood of what they believed or their correctness is not made clear to them. Eventually, they join – if they are saved from punishment – the level of those who follow the people of knowledge, such as children, women and Bedouins.

The remedy for this disease is what the "Physician of the Soul" (peace be on him) used to say when he woke from his sleep to offer his night prayers, "O Allah, Lord of Gabriel, Michael and Israfīl, Originator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the Unseen and the Apparent, You decide between Your servants in their disputes, I beseech You, with Your permission, to show me the truth concerning the matters which people have disputed. It is truly You

Who guides whom You will to the straight path" [recorded by Muslim].[155]

The Prophet (peace be on him) appealed in the name of the Lord of Gabriel, Michael and Israfil to be guided with Allah's permission to the truth in the matters wherein people differ because the true life of the heart is in guidance and these three angels have been entrusted by Allah to look after life. Gabriel is entrusted with the revelation, which is the cause of the life of the heart; Michael is entrusted with the rain, which is the cause of life for every animal and living organism; and Israfil is entrusted with blowing the Horn, which will bring the dead back to life and return the souls to their bodies. Appealing to Allah in the name of these great spirits and guardians of life can have a great effect in ensuring a favorable response. And Allah is the Supporter.

(42) The belief of a person in the seeing of Allah by the people of Paradise is not correct if that person tries to imagine what it is like or if he tries to interpret it according to his own understanding, since the interpretation of this seeing or the meaning of any of the subtle phenomena which are in the realm of Lordship, is by avoiding its interpretation and strictly adhering to submission. This is the faith of Islam. Those who do not refrain from negating Allah's attributes or conceiving them on human patterns are surely mistaken, they are unable to glorify Allah properly.

These words are directed at the Mu'tazilah and their ilk who deny the Beatific Vision, as well as those who conceive of Allah on the pattern of His creatures. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "You will see your Lord as you see the full moon."[156] Since "as" modifies "you see", the comparison is definitely between the two visions and not the objects seen. So the *ḥadīth* is very clear that Allah will appear in Paradise and people will actually see Him. It leaves nothing left unclear. What could be clearer or more explicit than that? If a *ḥadīth* like this is allowed to be interpreted metaphorically, no text can actually be relied upon. Surely, it cannot be interpreted to mean that men will know their Lord as they know

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[155]Aḥmad, 6:156; Muslim, *Ṣalāt al-Musafirīn*, 770; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 776; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3416; An-Nasā'ī, *Qiyām al-Layl*, 3:212-213; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1357.

[156]Recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and discussed earlier.

the full moon. Some people have argued for this interpretation based on verses like, "Do you not see how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant" [105:1], and other verses in which the word *rā'ī* - 'see' has been ascribed to the heart.

To be sure, seeing is sometimes an act of the eye, sometimes it is an act of understanding, and sometimes a type of dream, and so on. But in every case there is something in the language of the statement that makes it clear what kind of seeing is actually meant. If there are no contextual clues as to the intended meaning, the language will be deemed vague and obscure rather than clear and precise. What statement can be clearer than the statement, "You will see your Lord as you see the sun at noon when there are no clouds in the sky"?[157] Can anyone possibly raise the question as to whether these words refer to seeing with the eyes or seeing with the mind? Would anyone waver about the real meaning of this *ḥadīth* except one whose heart has been sealed by Allah?

Some might argue that they resorted to such an interpretation because reason rules out the possibility of seeing Allah. To this we respond: Your claim is rejected by most reasonable people and there is nothing in reason that would reject such an occurrence. Furthermore, if reason were asked about a being that exists by itself but cannot be seen, it would consider that being an impossibility.

The words of the author, "If that person tries to imagine what it is like, or if he tries to interpret it according to his own understanding..." mean that those who first imagine that Allah's vision should have such and such properties, similar to other things, and then confirm such properties that they have imagined, are anthropomorphists. If they deny vision based on those false grounds, they are then negators of Allah's attributes. What they should actually reject is their own image of the Vision and not the Vision itself. One should affirm what is true and negate what is false.

This is the idea which the author wants to convey by the statement, "Those who do not refrain from negating Allah's attributes or conceiving them on human patterns are surely mistaken; they are unable to glorify Allah properly." The Mu'tazilah are under the impression that they are glorifying Allah by rejecting the concept of His Vision. Is it an act of glorification to negate an attribute of perfection? One whose vision is denied does not have the attribute of perfection, for the non-being is also not visible. But perfection is in the affirmation of vision and, at the same time, denial that the vision

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[157]Aḥmad, 3:16; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 183; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 179.

is all-encompassing of Him. The same is the case with knowledge. We will not be praising Allah if we say that we cannot know anything of Him. In fact, we will be praising Him if we affirm that we can know Him and at the same time deny that we can fully comprehend Him. Certainly, Allah cannot be encompassed by either vision or knowledge.

The author's words, "Or if he tries to interpret it according to his own understanding," are directed against those who interpret the text in a way other than what it apparently means, or what every Arab would understand from it. Later writers use the term "interpretation" (*ta'wīl*) in this sense. They say that *ta'wīl* is to understand words in a sense different from what they apparently and overtly mean. In this way, they alter the meanings of various texts. They say, "We reinterpret whatever differs from our opinions." They give this distortion (*taḥrīf*) the name *ta'wīl* in order to make it sound appealing and acceptable, but Allah condemns those who try to make falsehood appealing. Allah says, "Likewise did We make for every messenger an enemy, evil ones among men and jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception" [6:112]. The point is to be taken from the meaning and not the words. Many false ideas have been "proven" in flowery language that actually opposes the true evidence.

The author's words here are similar to his words discussed earlier, "We do not try to interpret His words according to our opinions and imaginations." He stresses the meaning of that statement with his words, "The interpretation of this seeing or the meaning of any of the subtle phenomena which are in the realm of Lordship, is by avoiding its interpretation and strictly adhering to submission. This is the faith of Islam." He is saying here that one must refrain from *ta'wīl* (fanciful interpretation), or what is called interpretation, which is actually distortion of the text. But the author used a polite way to argue with them (so he did not call it distortion), as Allah has stated, "Argue with them in the way that is best" [16:125]. At the same time, though, he is not saying that everything that is termed *ta'wīl* is to be avoided. Nor should one not sometimes abandon the apparent meaning of a text when and if there is some dominating proof for such an action in the Book and the Sunnah. What he means is that one must avoid the false, innovated interpretations that go contrary to the opinions of the pious forefathers, and that the Book and the Sunnah demonstrate to be wrong; and one must avoid speaking about Allah without knowledge. From the fraudulent examples of *ta'wīl* (interpretations) are the interpretations of the evidence concerning Beatific Vision, the evidence concerning Allah's transcendence, the interpretation that

Allah did not speak to Moses and that Allah did not take Abraham as His friend.

In fact, the word *ta'wīl* itself began to be used in a manner other than its original sense. The meaning of *ta'wīl* in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) is the reality of the thing that the text points to. For example, the *ta'wīl* of an informative statement is the occurrence of the action described; and the *ta'wīl* of a prescriptive statement is the performance of the action prescribed. 'Ā'ishah said, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) used to say during his bowing (in prayer), 'Glory be to You, Allah, our Lord, and praise to You. Allah. Forgive me, in implementation (*yata'awwalu*) of the Qur'ān.'"[158] Allah also says in the Qur'ān, "Do they just wait for the fulfillment (*ta'wīl*) of the event? On the day the event is finally fulfilled (yatī'tawiluhu) those who disregarded it before will say: 'The messengers of our Lord did indeed bring true (tidings)'" [7:53]. In a similar sense is the notion of *ta'wīl* of a dream or *ta'wīl* of a deed. For example, Allah says, "This is the fulfillment (*ta'wīl*) of my dream I had before" [12:100]; "He will teach you the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the stories" [12:6]; "That is the best and most suitable for final determination (*ta'wīl*)" [4:59]; "Now I will tell you the reality (*ta'wīl*) of those things which you were unable to be patient with" [18:78]; and, "Such is the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of things concerning which you were unable to be patient" [18:8]. Who can deny the existence of those kinds of *ta'wīl* and the knowledge of what is related to command and prohibition from them?

As for informative statements, such as reports about Allah and the Hereafter, no one knows their *ta'wīl*, which is their exact reality. All that is known about them is what they state, but they cannot simply be known by description. If we do not have a prior idea of an object or have not yet experienced something, we cannot know its reality (*ta'wīl*) simply through description. In this sense, the *ta'wīl* of ultimate realities is known only to Allah. But the fact that no one else knows their *ta'wīl* in this sense does not mean that we cannot understand them. There is no verse in the Qur'ān that Allah does not require us to reflect upon. Nor has He revealed a word whose meaning He does not like us to know, although its ultimate

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[158]She was referring to the verse, "Glorify and praise your Lord, and pray for forgiveness" [110:3]. This was recorded in Aḥmad, 2:230; Al-Bukhārī, 817, 4968; Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 484; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 877; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1437; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Iftitāḥ*, 2:219.

reality is known to none but Him. This is what the word *ta'wīl* means in the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and statements of the Elders, regardless of whether it is in agreement with the apparent meaning of a text or not.

The word *ta'wīl* is used by many commentators on the Qur'ān, such as Ibn Jarīr[159] and others, to mean the exegesis of the passage regardless of whether it is the apparent meaning of the words or not. This is a famous usage of the term. In that case, *ta'wīl* is the same thing as *tafsīr*; what is correct is praised and what is wrong is rejected.

Concerning "No one knows its *ta'wīl* except Allah and those truly grounded in knowledge," [3:7], there are two readings of this verse. One reading stops after the words, "except Allah", and a second reading that does not stop at that point. Both of these readings are correct. What is meant by the first reading are the equivocal verse the knowledge of whose ultimate reality is hidden by Allah. The second reading, however, refers to the relatively unequivocal verses whose meanings the scholars know, which is also their *ta'wīl*.

Those who pause after the words, "except Allah", do not mean by *ta'wīl* the meanings of the words. A necessary consequence of that belief would be that there are some words that Allah revealed to His Messenger whose meanings no one knows, not even the Messenger. The people of knowledge would have no portion of such knowledge and could only say, "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord" [3:7]. But this is what any ordinary Believer could say, not just those grounded in knowledge. It is necessary that the people grounded in knowledge be somehow distinguished from laymen. In fact, Ibn 'Abbās said, "I am one of those well-grounded in knowledge who know the *ta'wīl*." He was truthful in that statement, as the Prophet (peace be on him) had prayed for him with these words, "O Allah, let him have a good understanding and insight into faith, and teach him *ta'wīl*" [recorded by Al-Bukhārī and others].[160] And the Prophet's supplication was never not responded to. Mujāhid said, "I recited the Qur'ān to Ibn 'Abbās, from its beginning until its ending, and I stopped after each

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[159]For the meaning of *ta'wīl* according to Ibn Jarīr, see his *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. vi, p. 201.

[160]The *ḥadīth* in these words have been recorded by Aḥmad, 1:266, 314, 328, 335; and Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 10614, 12506. Only its first sentence occurs in Al-Bukhārī, 143; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 3944.

verse and asked him about it." The numerous reports that have come from him show that he commented upon the meaning of the entire Qur'ān and never said about any verse, "This is from the equivocal verses whose meaning no one except Allah knows."

Some colleagues say that the equivocal verses are the separate letters that appear at the beginning of some chapters of the Qur'ān. This has been narrated from Ibn 'Abbās. But many people have spoken about the meanings of those verses. If their meanings are known, they are not equivocal verses; if they are not known, they are equivocal and the rest of the verses' meanings are understood. And that is the desired conclusion.

Furthermore, Allah says, "There are some verses that are unequivocal, those are the foundation of the Book. And others are equivocal" [3:7]. Those letters sitting by themselves are not considered complete verses according to the majority of the scholars who reckon the verses of the Qur'ān.

Ta'wīl in the terminology of the later jurists and theologians means to understand a word in a sense less probable than one more probable for some reason that demands it. It is in this sense that the *ta'wīl* of many verses, informative or prescriptive, have been disputed. Of these interpretations, those which agree with the text of the Qur'ān and Sunnah are correct, and those which disagree with them are wrong. This is discussed in detail in the relevant works. It is mentioned in *At-Tabsirah*[161] that Nāṣir Ibn Yahyā Al-Balkhī narrated on the authority of 'Umar Ibn Ismā'īl Ibn Ḥamād Ibn Abī Ḥanīfah, from Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥassan, who was asked about the verses and reports about the attributes of Allah whose literal meanings could lead to anthropomorphism and he said, "We take them as they have come down to us and we believe in them. And we do not say, 'How is that?' 'How is this?'"

One must know that an incorrect, blasphemous meaning cannot be the apparent or implied meaning of a text. If anyone understands it in such a way, it is only because he is deficient in his understanding and has a shortcoming in his knowledge. As it is said concerning the words of some people, "How many times do correct words come from a weak-minded person. But he is destroyed because of his weak understanding." Also, "It is incumbent upon me to take the poems from their places. But it is not my fault if the cow does not understand them.

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[161]This is probably *Tabṣirah al-Ādillah fī al-Kalām* by Abū Al-Mu'īn Maymūn Ibn Muḥammad An-Nasafī (d. 508/1114).

What could one then say about Allah's statement – and He is the most truthful and best of speech – concerning the Book as "a Book whose verses have been clearly stated and then explained in detail, from One Who is Wise and well-acquainted (with all things)" [11:1]. Those who subject the texts to their own interpretations believe, in fact, that the language of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* are blasphemous and misleading. They state that the Qur'ān and Sunnah do not clearly state the faith and that they fail to formulate Allah's oneness in terms befitting His majesty. That is the reality of the statements of those who make *ta'wīl*.

The truth is that what the Qur'ān points to is the truth. And it does not prove things that are false. Instead, these misguided people think that the Qur'ānic statements are faulty and should be interpreted in a different manner.

It must be said to these people, "The door that you have opened, although you claim to have been able to defeat some of your brother Muslims in some minor details, is also a door that you have opened to the polytheists and heretics. You do not have the ability to close it. For if you have allowed the twisting of the words of the Qur'ān from how they are understood without any legal evidence for such scripture twisting, then what are the principles that distinguish an acceptable interpretation and a twisting that is not acceptable?"

If you respond to that criticism by saying, "What is definitely proven by reason to be unacceptable, we will reinterpret; others we will accept as they are," Then it must be asked of you, "According to what reason will you measure the definite conclusions of reason?" The Karmatian esoterics claim that their reason has demonstrated that no text can be taken at face value. The philosophers claim that reason contradicts the texts that speak of the resurrection of the body. The Mu'tazilah claim that reason repudiates the Beatific Vision and falsifies His foreknowledge of human acts, as well as His speech and mercy. The door to such interpretations has led to so many claims based on reason that not all of them can be mentioned in this place.

There are two greatly unacceptable consequences of their view. First, we do not accept anything of the meanings of the Book or Sunnah until we research the matter in great detail to determine if reason will accept such a proposition. And every group which diverges from the Book claims that reason points to what they believe in. The matter can only end in nothing but confusion and chaos.

Second, people will lose firm faith in all that the Prophet (peace be on him) said because they will not be certain that the apparent meaning of his speech is what he meant. Furthermore, the

interpretations of his speech are contradictory. This means that we would not be able to know from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* what the message of Allah is for His people. The mission of the Prophet (peace be on him) was to convey Allah's message, and the Qur'ān is that supreme message. Therefore, we find the people of *ta'wīl* quoting the Qur'ān and Sunnah only to support the views which they have already formed and not to base their views on the Qur'ān. If the Qur'ān and Sunnah are in agreement with what their reason states, they agree with it. If it contradicts what their reason accepts, they reinterpret it. This has opened the door to hypocrisy and heresy. We ask Allah to save us.

(43) Those who do not refrain from nafī (negating the attributes of Allah) and *tashbīh* (imagining Allah's attributes to be like human attributes) go astray and fail to glorify Allah properly.

Negating Allah's attributes (*nafī*) or conceptualizing them to be like human attributes (*tashbīh*) are diseases of the heart. Diseases of the heart are of two kinds: the disease of doubt and the disease of lust. Both have been mentioned in the Qur'ān. Allah says, "Be not too complaisant of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire" [33:32]. He has referred to the former in these verses, "In their hearts there is a disease; and Allah has increased their disease" [2:10]; and, "But for those in whose hearts is a disease, it will add only doubt to their doubt" [9:125]. This disease is one of doubt and it is worse than the disease of lust. The latter is cured when the lust is satisfied, but there is no cure for doubt, unless Allah has mercy on the patient and rescues him from it.

Misconceptions concerning the attributes of Allah may lead either to their negation or to anthropomorphism. The former is worse than the latter, for it implies rejecting and falsifying the Prophet's teachings, whereas the latter is to exceed the limits set by the Prophet (peace be on him). To liken Allah's attributes to the attributes of creatures is infidelity, for He has said, "There is nothing like unto Him" [42:11]. But to negate His attributes is also infidelity, for He has said, "He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing" [42:11].

This is one kind of *tashbīh*. *Tashbīh* is actually of two types. One is comparing the Creator with the created. This is the type that the theologians have tried endlessly to refute and falsify. But the people who hold that kind of thought are fewer than the people who believe in the second kind of tashbih, which is to liken the created

with the Creator. This is the case with those who worship Christ, Ezra, the sun, the moon, idols, the angels, fire, water, the calf, the graves, jinns and other things. These are the people to whom the messengers were sent to call them to the worship of Allah alone, with no partners.

(44) For our Lord is qualified with the attributes (ṣifāt) of uniqueness (*waḥdanīyyah*) and the characteristics (*nu'ūt*) of absolute singularity (*fardanīyyah*). No created being shares with Him these attributes.

The author shows that to glorify Allah properly is to deny or affirm the attributes that He has respectively denied or affirmed of Himself. In fact, the author takes these aspects from Sūrat Al-Ikhlāṣ (Purity of Faith) in the Qur'ān. His statement, "For our Lord is qualified with the attributes (ṣifāt) of uniqueness (*waḥdanīyyah*)" is derived from "Say: He is Allah, the One and Unique." And his words, "and the characteristics (nu'ūt) of absolute singularity (*fardanīyyah*)", are taken from "Allah, the Absolute, He begets not, nor is He begotten." The statement, "No created being shares with Him these attributes," is derived from the words, "There is none like unto Him" [112:4].

These words also emphasize the point which the author made previously about affirming the attributes of Allah and denying anthropomorphism. The words *ṣifah* (pl. *ṣifāt*) and *na't* (pl. *nu'ūt*) are synonyms or very close in meaning, where the former qualifies the essence (*dhāt*) and the latter qualifies acts. *Waḥdanīyyah* and *fardanīyyah* have likewise been considered synonymous. Some say that the difference between them is that waḥdanīyyah refers to essence while *fardanīyyah* refers to attributes. Allah, Most High, is one, unique in His essence and singular in His attributes. This is true and there is no difference of opinion concerning it. I, however, feel that there is a kind of redundancy in the words, not only here but at many places. This kind of style is more suitable for sermons and prayers, rather than for a discussion on *tawḥīd*. Moreover, flowery and rhyming prose is more suitable for the former than the latter. The words, "There is nothing like unto Him," that are found in the Qur'ān [42:11] emphasize the glory of Allah better than the words, "No created beings share with Him these attributes," which is stated here.

(45) Allah is supremely exalted above definition of Him or from being restricted, or from needing any parts, limbs or instruments. He is not bound by the six directions of space as all created beings are.

Before commenting on this text, I would like to make a few general remarks. First, people can be divided into three groups on the question of whether terms like those mentioned in the text can be applied to Allah. One group affirms such terms for Allah; another group denies them; a third group, which follows the way of the Elders, calls for more clarification. The third group neither affirms them in general until it is made clear that what is affirmed by such terms is to be affirmed and what is negated by such terms is to be negated. They take this approach because later scholars use such terminology that includes a lot of vagueness and ambiguities, as is the case with other types of terminology. Therefore, not all of them use the same term to mean exactly the same. Hence, anyone who denies it completely denies what is both correct and incorrect without discrimination, and imputes to those who affirm them things that they never said. Some of those who affirm such terms include in their connotations ideas that go against the views of the Elders and conflict with the Qur'ān and Sunnah, or have nothing in them either for or against them. We have not the right to attribute to Allah things that He did not attribute to Himself, nor did His Messenger attribute to Him, either with respect to negation or affirmation. On this point we must be followers and not innovators.

It is necessary to investigate this subject, that is, the subject of attributes, and to attribute to Allah what Allah and His Messenger have affirmed and to negate of Allah what Allah and His Messenger have negated. Adhering to the terms used in the texts (of the Qur'ān and Sunnah) will protect one in matters of affirmation and negation. We affirm what terms and meanings Allah and His Messenger have affirmed; in addition, we negate any terms or meanings that the texts have negated.

As for the terms concerning which there is no explicit affirmation or negation, we do not make any general statement about them until we can determine what is meant by them. If their meanings are correct, we accept them, although it is best to use the terms actually found in the texts (of the Qur'ān and Sunnah) and not use the vague terms unless there is a pressing need to do so. But even then, they must be accompanied by contextual evidence that shows their meanings. For example, one might be speaking to someone who will not be convinced or will not understand except when those terms are employed.

The author has included this passage in order to refute anthropomorphists like Dawūd Al-Jawāribī and others like him who say that Allah is a solid thing or a body with organs. Exalted is He above what they ascribe to Him.

The author is correct in his statement but later, people extended his negation and overstepped the limits. This is in need of further explanation. The Elders are in agreement that man cannot define Allah or His attributes. Abū Dawūd At-Tayālisī said that Sufyān, Shū'bah, Ḥammad Ibn Zayd, Ḥammad Ibn Salāmah, Shurayk and Abū 'Uwānah never tried to define Allah or liken Him to or compare Him with anything. They would simply narrate the *ḥadīth* and refuse to elaborate on the narrations. When pressed, they would only quote a saying of a Companion or a Successor. We will return to this point when discussing the author's words, "He has barred His creatures from comprehending Him." He means that no one can define Allah, and not that Allah is not distinguished from His creation, separate from it, apart from it. 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak[162] was asked, "How should we think of our Lord?" He said, "Think that He is on the Throne, completely different from His creatures." Someone asked, "Is He different by definition?" He said, "Yes, by definition."

We know that definition sometimes refers to what separates one thing from another and distinguishes it. Since Allah does not reside in any of His creation, nor does He exist by them, but on the contrary He exists by Himself and brings all things into existence and sustains them, no one would object to defining Allah in this sense; otherwise, it would mean denying Allah's existence and essence. But if we understand definition in the sense of comprehending Him as He is and stating it in words, that is impossible.

There is a consensus among the Ahl as-Sunnah on this point. Abū Al-Qāsim Al-Qushayrī says in his *Risāḷah* that Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān As-Sulāmī narrated from Abū Mansūr Ibn 'Abdullah, and he from Abū Al-Ḥassan Al-'Anbarī that Sahl Ibn 'Abdullah Aṭ-Ṭustarī, answering a question about the existence of God, said, "Allah's essence is qualified with knowledge. He cannot be encompassed in knowledge, or seen by eyes in this world. He is available to faith, but transcends definition and comprehension, and does not reside in anything. Eyes will see Him in the Hereafter

[162]For the quote from 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak here, see Ad-Dārimī, *Ar-Radd 'alā al-Jahmīyyah* (Damascus: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmī, 1381/1961), p. 50.

manifested in His power and authority. He has barred creatures from knowing His essence, but has helped them to know Him through His signs. Hence, hearts know Him, but eyes cannot compass Him. The faithful will see Him with their eyes, but encompass Him or scan His majesty they will not."[163]

As for the terms "parts, limbs or instruments", some of the negators used them to deny some attributes that are confirmed by definitive evidence, such as hand and face. Abū Ḥanīfah wrote in *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, "Allah has a hand (*yad*), face (*wajh*) and a soul (*nafs*). He has Himself mentioned them in the Qur'ān. They are His attributes, and we must affirm them without inquiring into their nature. We should never say that His hand is power or blessings, as by doing so one nullifies the attribute."[164] What the Imām stated is confirmed by definitive evidence. For example, Allah has said, "What prevents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My two hands" [38:75]. Also, "On the Day of Judgment the whole of the earth will be but His handful and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand" [39:67]. Concerning His face, Allah has stated, "Everything (that exists) will perish except His Own countenance" [28:88]; also, "But will abide forever the countenance of your Lord" [55:27]. (Concerning His soul), Allah has stated (quoting Jesus), "You know what is in my soul though I know not what is in Your soul (*nafs*)" [5:116]; and, "Your Lord has inscribed for Himself (*nafsihi*) the rule of mercy" [6:54]; also, "And I have prepared you for Myself (*nafsī*)" [20:41]; and, finally, "But Allah cautions you to remember His soul (*nafsahu*)" [3:28]. The Prophet (peace be on him) stated in the famous *ḥadīth* of intercession, "People will come to Adam and say, 'Allah created you with His hands, commanded the angels to bow to you and taught you the names of all things.'"[165]

It is not correct to say that the dual 'hands' here means 'power' as the words, "whom I have created with My two hands" [38:75] cannot be understood as "whom I have created with My two powers," otherwise Iblīs could have said to Allah, "You had also created me with Your power," so Adam would have no superiority over him. Iblīs – even with his infidelity – knew Allah better than

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[163]Al-Qushayrī, *Ar-Risālah*, 'Abdul-Halim Al-Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd Ibn Ash-Sharīf, eds. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥādithah, 1972), p. 585.

[164]*Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, pp. 58-59.

[165]Part of a long *ḥadīth* on intercession in Al-Bukhārī, 4476, 7516. Also see Al-Bukhārī, 6565; Muslim, 193; Ibn Mājah, 4312.

the Jahmīyyah. Furthermore, there is no evidence for them in the statement of Allah, "Do they not see that it is We Who have created for them – among other things which Our hands have fashioned – cattle, which are under their dominion" [36:71]. Allah has used "hands" in the plural because the genitive pronoun, "Our," whose construct it is, is also plural; both underline the dominion and the majesty of Allah. "Hands" in the plural form has never been used with a singular genitive pronoun, nor has the dual been used with a plural genitive pronoun. Hence, the words, "which Our hands have fashioned" [35:71] cannot be compared with the words, "whom I have created with My two hands" [38:75].

The Prophet (peace be on him) also said about Allah, "His veil is light. If He were to remove it, the splendor of His face would burn every creature His eyes would fall upon."[166]

On the other hand, one does not say about these attributes that they are organs (*a'ḍa*), limbs (*jawāriḥ*), instruments (*adwāt*) or parts (*arkān*, sing. *rukn*). For *rukn* is a part of the essence (*mahīyyah*), and Allah is absolutely one, perfect and indivisible (Al-Aḥad, Aṣ-Ṣamad). Similarly, "organs" gives the impression of division and differentiation. Allah is exalted above that. This is clear in the verse, "who have made the Qur'ān into *'iḍīn* (shreds)" [15:91]. *'Iḍīn* is from the same root as *'adwāt*. *Jawāriḥ* (limbs) implies the idea of acquisition and use. *Adwāt* are the instruments which are used for bringing about some good or preventing some evil. All of those meanings are ruled out with respect to Allah. This is the reason none of these words have been used in reference to Allah (in the Qur'ān or Sunnah). The words used in the text have correct meanings to them. They are free from any kind of confusion or guile. Therefore, one must not use terms other than the ones used in the texts (of the Qur'ān or Sunnah) when it comes to affirming or negating something about Allah; otherwise one may affirm something that is incorrect or negate something which is correct. All of these other terms are vague and can be interpreted in different ways, right as well as wrong.

As for the word *jihah* (direction), it may imply something existent or non-existent. It is well known that there is nothing in existence except the Creator and the created. Hence, if by direction one means an existent other than Allah, it would be something

[166]This is a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* that was discussed earlier. For more on this point, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 3:45-46, 6:363-366; and Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Mukhtasar as-Sawā'iq al-Murṣalāh*, 2:153-174.

created. As such, it could not encompass Allah, for no created being can encompass Him. Exalted is He above that. If by the word "direction" one means something non-existent, that is, beyond the bounds of this world, then there is nothing there except Allah. Taking "direction" in this sense, if we say that Allah is in a certain direction or space, it is correct, for it means that He is above the world, beyond the limits of creation and beyond everything.

Those who negate direction, those who desire by that to deny that Allah is transcendent and above the creation, use as their evidence that all directions and space are created. But Allah must have been before any kind of direction or space. Moreover, if Allah is in a direction or space, it would mean that a part of the world is eternal, or that there was a time when Allah was above space and then entered into it. These arguments are advanced to show that Allah is not in anything created, whether we call it space, direction or anything else. This is true. But the fact is that space is not something existing but it is only a point of view (*amr i'tibārī*). There is no doubt that spaces or directions (*jihāt*) are boundless and what is not in the boundless does not exist.

What the author stated, "He is not bound by the six directions of space as all created beings are," is true in the sense that nothing created can encompass Him. On the contrary, He encompasses all and is above all. This is what the author means by this statement, as later he states, "Allah encompasses all and is above all." When we put these words together with the above sentence, it becomes clear that what he wants to say is that Allah is not surrounded or encompassed by anything, as created beings are; on the contrary, He encompasses everything and is above everything.

But there are two more observations that must be made concerning his statement. First, it would have been better for him to avoid the use of these terms which are general and vague. One could accuse him of making contradictory statements and argue that he affirms that Allah encompasses everything and is above everything, and at the same time he denies that He is above all. However, this charge can easily be repudiated by saying, as we have done, that what he denies is that anything created can encompass Him. (This example shows) that using the wording of the texts (of the Qur'ān and Sunnah) is best.

Second, his statement, "as all created beings are," suggests that all created beings are contained. This is debatable. If he means by that that they are contained by something existing, that is not true, for the world is not contained by another world. If this were not the case, one would then run into an infinite regression. On the other hand, if he means 'bound by something that does not exist,' that too

is not correct. Not everything created is in a non-being. Some things are inside other things, just as the heavens and earth are in the Footstool, and so on. In addition, some things mark the ultimate limit of the created world, such as the Throne. In any case, the world is not in any other created object as otherwise we would not be able to avoid an infinite regression, as we have just stated.

One might respond to this objection by stating that the word *sa'īr* in the words *sa'īr al-mubtada'āt* (as all created beings are) does not mean 'all' but 'the rest' of the created beings, which is the original meaning of the word. *Sa'īr* comes from the same root as *su'r*, which means what is left over from a drink or meal. Hence, the reference here would be 'most of the created things and not all of them,' or 'the majority and not the totality'. Hence, what the author means is that Allah is not bound by anything, as are most of the creation. He is absolutely unbounded. However, we cannot imagine that the author is one of those who say that Allah is neither in the world nor outside of it, as some commentators have suggested. But his meaning is that Allah is too exalted for any of His creatures to encompass Him and too perfect to need anything, be it the Throne or anything else.

It is debatable whether Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ever said these words. His opponents attacked him on much more trivial matters. Had they thought he made a statement like this, they would have openly denounced him and that denunciation would have been known to everyone. On the contrary, Abū Mutī Al-Balkhī narrated that Abū Ḥanīfah confirmed Allah's being above the world, as we will mention later, God willing. But the most apparent meaning of the words mentioned here imply negation of that concept. There is no statement of this nature in either the Book or the Sunnah. For that reason I say that there is some debate as to whether Abū Ḥanīfah actually said it. The best course would be to refrain from saying anything general on this issue. Had it been a matter related to the words stated in the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, such as mounting the Throne (*istiwā*) or coming down (*nuzul*), we could talk about them. Only an ignorant person would say that when Allah comes down to the lowest heaven,[167] as we have in the *ḥadīth*, the

[167]Allah's descent has been referred to in various *aḥādīth*. See Al-Bukhārī, 1145, 6321, 7494; Muslim, *Ṣalāt al-Musafirīn*, 758; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1315; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3493; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1366; Mālik, *Al-Muwaṭṭa* (Muḥammad Fuwād 'Abdul-Baqī, ed., Cairo: 'Isa Al-Ḥalabī, 1370/1951), 1:214; Aḥmad, 2:264, 265, 267, 282, 419, 487, 504; Ad-Dāraquṭnī, *Kitāb an-Nuzul* ('Alī Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Naṣir, ed; Madinah: Al-Faqihī, 1403/1983), pp. 102, 103, 107;

Throne will be above Him and He will be in between the two realms of the universe. This goes against the consensus of the Elders as well as the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

Furthermore, Shaykh al-Islām Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'īl Ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān Aṣ-Ṣabūnī wrote that he heard from Abū Mansūr Ibn Hamshadh that Abū Ḥanīfah was asked about the *ḥadīth* that mentions Allah's descending. He replied, "Allah descends in a manner unknown to us."[168]

Those who keep silent on the issue of Allah's transcendence over the world do so because their knowledge of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the sayings of the Elders is limited. For that reason, some of them reject the notion that Allah is above the Throne. They say that He is neither above nor beside it, nor inside or outside the world. They thus describe Allah in negative and impossible terms. They decline to predicate of Him what He has predicated of Himself, such as His being above the world or established on the Throne. Others say that He resides in everything. Still others say that He is all that is there, and so on. Far exalted is Allah above all these wild surmises and blasphemous statements. We will, God willing, discuss the transcendence (*'ulu*) of Allah in detail later, while commenting on the author's statement, "He encompasses all and is above all."

(46) The ascension (*mi'rāj*) of the Prophet (peace be on him) is a fact. He was taken in person for a journey by night, and lifted awake and in body to the heavens, and from there to such heights as Allah pleased. Allah showered upon him His favors as He pleased and revealed to him what He liked. His heart did not falsify what his eyes saw. Blessed is he in this life and in the Hereafter.

Mi'raj means a device by which one goes up or ascends. It works like a ladder. Its nature, however, is unknown. We believe in it without inquiring into its nature, as we do with all other transcendental realities. The author has stated, "He was taken for a

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Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣifāt*, p. 449; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ 'Aqīdat Ahl as-Sunnah*, p. 745. All of the above *aḥādīth* were reported by Abū Hurayrah. For reports from other Companions, see As-Suyūṭī, *Al-Azhar al-Mutanāthirah*, p. 124.

[168]Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'īl Aṣ-Ṣabūnī, *'Aqīdat as-Salaf*, Badr Al-Badr, ed. (Kuwait: Ad-Dār as-Salafīyyah, 1404/1984].

journey by night, and lifted awake and in body to the heavens." However, there are three different views on this subject.

One view is that it was a journey of the soul, but his body was not left behind. This is the view of 'Ā'ishah and Mu'āwīyah (may Allah be pleased with them) as recorded by Ibn Isḥāq. Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣrī is also reported to have had the same view.

But one must distinguish between the view that the Prophet (peace be on him) was taken for a journey by night while asleep and the view that it was a journey of the soul without the body. There is a great difference between the two. 'Ā'ishah and Mu'āwīyah did not say that the journey was while he was asleep; they only said that he was taken with his soul for a journey in the night though his body was left behind. The difference between the two may be explained as follows. What one sees in sleep is a representation of his thoughts in sensible form. For example, he will see that he is taken up to the heavens or to Makkah, although his soul neither ascends or travels. The angel of dreams produces images for him representing those things. When 'Ā'ishah and Mu'āwīyah said that the nocturnal journey (*isra'*) took place in sleep, what they meant is that the soul went for a journey leaving the body behind and then it returned to it.[169] Thus, they consider this one of the Prophet's special privileges, as no other soul can attain a complete ascent to the heavens except after death.[170]

Another view is that the *isra'* took place twice, once while the Prophet (peace be on him) was awake and once while he was asleep. Those who hold this view try to reconcile the *ḥadīth* narrated by Shurayk in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Then I got up from sleep"[171] with other narrations of the *ḥadīth*.

Some say that the *isra'* occurred once before revelation and a second time after revelation commenced. Another view is that it took place three times, once before he received revelations and twice afterwards. It seems that whenever people come across a new *ḥadīth* which they cannot explain, they assume a new event in order to

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[169]According to Al-Albānī, the narration from 'Ā'ishah and Mu'āwīyah is not authentic, so there is no need to try to give it this interpretation.

[170]Ibn Al-Qayyīm has discussed the issue at length in *Zād al-Ma'ād*, Shu'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ and 'Abdul-Qādir Al-Arnawūṭ, eds. (Beirut: Mū'assassat A*r-Risālah*, n.d.), 3:401.

[171]The words, "Then I got up from sleep," occur only in the narrations of Shurayk and are considered to be one of his mistakes. In his version of the *ḥadīth*, Ibn Ḥajr noted ten features which do not coincide with other versions of the *ḥadīth*. See Ibn Ḥajr, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 13:404-405.

harmonize the different narrations. But this sophistry is only uttered by people who are not proficient in *ḥadīth*, for the leading scholars of *ḥadīth* all agree that the isra' took place only once, in Makkah, after the revelations began, one year before the emigration, while others say a year and two months before the emigration, as Ibn 'Abdul-Barr mentioned.

Commenting on this, Shams ad-Dīn Ibn Al-Qayyīm stated, "I wonder how people think that the *isra'* occurred many times. How could it be that they think that Allah would command fifty prayers and the Prophet (peace be on him) would go back and forth between Him and Moses until He reduced them to five and say, 'I have reduced them and made them incumbent on my servants,' and then go over the whole thing again, commanding fifty prayers first and then again reducing them to five! The scholars of *ḥadīth* have noted that Shurayk, who reported such a *ḥadīth* of the *isra'*, was mistaken in his narration. Muslim recorded the best of his narrations and then said, "He has altered the order of things, putting later things earlier and earlier things later, he has also added some things and deleted others. And Muslim did not record his narration and he did well in not doing so.""[172]

The *ḥadīth* of *isra'* states that the Prophet (peace be on him) was taken while awake, in body, for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to the *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem. He was riding on Burāq, accompanied by Gabriel. At the *Bayt al-Maqdis*, the Prophet (peace be on him) dismounted, tied Burāq with a ring at the gate of the mosque, and led a prayer during which all the prophets were present. Some say that he dismounted in Bethlehem and led a prayer there, but this is not correct howsoever.

Then the Prophet (peace be on him) was taken from Jerusalem to the first heaven. At the request of Gabriel, the gate was opened and the Prophet (peace be on him) saw Adam, the father of humanity, therein. The Prophet (peace be on him) greeted him. Adam welcomed him and returned his greeting and affirmed his prophethood. He was then taken to the second heaven. Its gate was opened and he saw Yahyā Ibn Zakarīyyā (John) and 'Isa Ibn Maryam (Jesus) therein. He greeted them and they, in return, greeted him and affirmed his prophethood. Then he ascended to the third heaven. Therein he saw Yūsuf (Joseph). He greeted him and his greeting was responded to. Yūsuf welcomed him and also affirmed his prophethood. He then ascended to the fourth heaven.

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[172]Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Zādal-Ma'ād*, 3:42.

Therein he saw Idrīs, who greeted the Prophet (peace be on him), welcomed him and affirmed his prophethood. He then was taken to the fifth heaven, wherein he saw Hārūn Ibn 'Imrān (Aaron), who greeted him, welcomed him and affirmed his prophethood.

He then was taken to the sixth heaven wherein he saw Moses. Moses greeted him, welcomed him and affirmed his prophethood. When he left him, Moses cried. It was asked of him, "What makes you cry?" He said, "I cry because I see that the young man who is sent after me will have more followers going to Paradise than I will." Thereafter, the Prophet (peace be on him) was taken to the seventh heaven where he met Abraham and greeted him. Abraham greeted him and affirmed his prophethood. From there he was taken to the sidrat al-muntahā (the lote-tree of the utmost boundary) and then he was shown the *bayt al-ma'mūr* (the much-frequented house).

Then he was taken to the Inaccessible, exalted be His Majesty and Hallowed be His Names. He came close to Him, a distance of two bows or less.[173] Allah revealed to His servant what He pleased. He obligated fifty prayers. Thereafter, the Prophet (peace be on him) returned. When he passed by Moses, Moses asked him about what had been ordained. He told him of the fifty prayers. Moses said that they would be too much for his followers and that he should go back to Allah and request Him to reduce it for his followers. The Prophet (peace be on him) turned to Gabriel as if seeking his advice. He motioned, "Yes, if you wish." So he took him back to Allah, the Mighty, the Most High and Most Holy while He was at the same place – this is the wording of Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* and of some of the narrations – and He reduced the amount by ten prayers.

Then he descended until he came to Moses. He informed him of what had happened and he said, "Go back to your Lord and ask for it to be reduced." He continued to go between Moses and Allah, the Blessed and Most High, until the prayers became five in number. Moses told him to go back again and ask for more of a reduction,

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[173]This sentence, too, is part of the *ḥadīth* reported by Shurayk and is one of his mistakes. The commentator should have pointed this out. Al-Khaṭṭābī observed that the *ḥadīth* has been narrated through channels other than Shurayk, but these words do not occur in them. Ibn Kathīr said that Shurayk mixed things up in narrating the *ḥadīth* and added words that did not occur in the *ḥadīth* reported by others. Ibn Kathīr also quoted the remarks of Al-Bayhāqī that the words, "He came closer...", as they occur in the Qur'ān (53:8), refer to Gabriel, not Allah. This is agreed upon by all the commentators of the Qur'ān, but here Shurayk quotes them in the wrong context. See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, (Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifah, 1405/1984), 3:3.

but the Prophet (peace be on him) then said, "I have now become shy of my Lord, but I am pleased and I submit." At that point, there was an announcement, "I have fully ordained what I wanted to make obligatory and I have reduced the burden on my servants."[174]

I mentioned earlier that there is a difference of opinion among the Companions as to whether or not the Prophet (peace be on him) saw his Lord with his eyes, and stated that the correct opinion is that he saw Allah with his heart, not with his eyes. The one referred to in the two verses of Sūrat An-Najm, "The heart did not falsify what he saw" [verse 11], and "He has certainly seen him descending another time" [verse 13], is Gabriel, as we authentically know from the Prophet (peace be on him) himself. The Prophet (peace be on him) saw Gabriel twice in the original form in which he was created.

As for "approaching" and "coming near" mentioned in verse 8 of the same *sūrah*, "He approached and came near," they are different from the ones mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of *isra'*. 'Ā'ishah and Ibn Mas'ūd have clarified that it was Gabriel who approached and came near. The context of the verse confirms this. The verses read, "He was taught by one mighty in power, imbued with wisdom, for he appeared (in stately form) while he was in the highest part of the horizon. Then he approached and came nearer." On the other hand, the approaching and coming nearer mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of *isra'* is that of Allah. It was Allah Who approached and came near.[175] As for Sūrat An-Najm, on the other hand, it was Gabriel whom the Prophet (peace be on him) saw descending at the *sidrat al-muntaha*. He saw him once on earth and the other time near the sidrat al-muntahā.

One of the proofs that the Prophet (peace be on him) was taken in bodily form while awake is the verse, "Glory be to Allah, Who did take his servant (*'abd*) for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque (at Makkah) to the Farthest Mosque (in Jerusalem)" [17:1]. The word *'abd* is an expression used for both the body and the spirit, in the same way that *insān* (human being) is a word that includes both the body and the spirit of a person. This is the

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[174]The *ḥadīth* of the *Isra'* as reported by Anas Ibn Mālik through Mālik bin Ṣa'ṣa'ah has been recorded by Al-Bukhārī, 3207, 3887; Muslim, 164; An-Nasā'ī, 1:217: Aḥmad, 4:208, 210; Ibn Ḥibban, 48; and Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 19:599. The text the commentator quoted is from Ibn Al-Qayyīm's *Zādal-Ma'ād* (vol. 3, p. 38) and not directly from Al-Bukhārī; and Ibn Al-Qayyīm did not quote the exact words of Al-Bukhārī.

[175]The commentator is relying on the words of Shurayk, which, as mentioned earlier, are mistaken narrations from Shurayk.

common, well-known usage of the term. That is the correct meaning (here). The *isra'*, therefore, was with both (the soul and the body). Reason cannot preclude that. If one can doubt the ascent of a human being, then one can also doubt the descent of the angels. That can also lead to the denial of prophethood which is clear infidelity (*kufr*).

One may ask what the wisdom is behind the Prophet (peace be on him) first being taken to the *Bayt al-Maqdis* (in Jerusalem). The answer is, and surely Allah knows best, that this was done in order to demonstrate that Muḥammad's prophethood was true. When the Quraysh asked the Prophet (peace be on him) to describe Jerusalem, he described it to them.[176] He also informed them about the caravan that he passed by on his trip.[177] Had he been taken directly up to the heavens from Makkah, that would not have happened. Nobody, of course, could have asked him about the description of heaven and then check the veracity of his statement. But since they were acquainted with the *Bayt al-Maqdis*, they could ask him about it.

In the *ḥadīth* of ascension there is evidence for the confirmation of Allah's transcendence about the creation, if one were to ponder it. And with Allah is guidance.

(47) *Al-Ḥawḍ* (the Fountain), which Allah will grant the Prophet (peace be upon him) as an honor to quench the thirst of his nation, is factual.

The *aḥādīth* narrated concerning the Fountain reach the level of *mutawātir*. They have been narrated from thirty some-odd Companions. Our teacher, Sheikh 'Imād ad-Dīn Ibn Kathīr, may Allah shower His blessings upon him, has collected all the channels through which the *aḥādīth* have been transmitted in his great history, *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah*.[178]

Among those chains is what Al-Bukhārī recorded on the authority of Anas Ibn Mālik, who narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "My fountain will be as wide as the distance from Aylah to San'a in Yemen. And it will contain as many jugs as the stars in the sky."[179]

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[176]See the *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī, 3886, 4710, and Muslim, 170.

[177]Aḥmad, 1:374; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 3:15.

[178]Ibn Kathīr, *An-Nihāyah*, Dr. Aḥmad Abū Mulhim, et al., eds. (Cairo: Dār Ar-Rayyān li at-Turāth, 1408/1988), 1:337-73.

[179]Al-Bukhārī, 6580; Muslim, *Ar-Riqāq*, 2303; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2444; Aḥmad, 3:230.

Anas also narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Some of my companions will come to my Fountain. When I see them and they are presented to me, they will be detained on the way while coming to me. I will say, 'My companions!' It will be said, 'You do not know what they innovated after you.'" [recorded by Muslim].[180]

Aḥmad recorded from Anas Ibn Mālik that one time the Prophet (peace be on him) dozed off for a little while. He then raised his head and smiled. Then he either said to them or they said to him, "What has made you smile?" He said, "A *sūrah* has just been revealed to me. It says: 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, We have given you the Kawthar (the Fountain of Abundance)...' until the end of the *sūrah*. Then he said, "Do you know what the Kawthar is?" They said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "It is a river that Allah will give me in Paradise. It will abound in goodness. On the Day of Judgment, my followers will come to it and find there as many cups for drinking as the number of stars. Some of them, however, will be taken away. I will say, 'O Allah, they are from my nation.' Allah will say, 'You do not know what they did after you.'"[181] Muslim recorded that *ḥadīth* with the wording, "It is a river which my Lord has promised me. It will abound in goodness. It will be a fountain to which my followers will come on the Day of Judgment."[182] The rest of the *ḥadīth* is the same as the one recorded by Ahmad.

The meaning of the *ḥadīth* is that there will be two outlets from that River of Abundance to the Fountain. The Fountain will be on the Plain of Judgment facing the Bridge (*aṣ-Ṣirāṭ*) which will cause people to stagger. Some of them will not be allowed to drink from the Fountain since they had apostasized from Islam. People such as they will not be able to cross the bridge.

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim record on the authority of Jundub Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Bajalī, who heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) say, "I will precede you at the Fountain."[183] Farat, the word used in the *ḥadīth*, means the one who reaches the water first.

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[180] Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2304; Al-Bukhārī, 6582. Also see Al-Bukhārī, 6576, 6583; Muslim, 2290, 2297; Aḥmad, 5:333, 339, 388.

[181] Aḥmad, 3:102; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4747; An-Nasā'ī, 2:133.

[182] Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 400.

[183] Al-Bukhārī, 6589; Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2289; Aḥmad, 4:313; Al-Ḥumaydī, 779; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 1688, 1689.

Al-Bukhārī recorded from Sahl Ibn Sa'd Al-Anṣārī that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "I will precede you at the Fountain. Whoever comes to it will drink from it, and whoever drinks from it will never be thirsty again. Some people will come to me, whom I will recognize and who will recognize me, and then there will be a barrier between me and them." Abū Hāzm, one of the narrators of the *ḥadīth*, said, "An-Nu'mān Ibn Abī 'Ayyāsh heard me (while I was narrating that). He said, 'Is that how you heard it from Sahl?' I said yes. He said, 'I swear that I heard it from Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī, but he added the words, "They are from my nation. And it will be said, 'You do not know what they innovated after you.' I will say, 'Get away, get away to those who changed after me.'"'"[184]

What can be concluded from all the *aḥādīth* narrated about the Fountain is that it is a great and huge Fountain. Its water will come from the River of Abundance, mixed with the water of Paradise. It will be whiter than milk, colder than ice, sweeter than honey, and better smelling than musk. The Fountain will be vast and as long as it is wide. The distance between its two corners will be equal to a month-long journey. In some of the *aḥādīth* it states, "Its water will continue to increase as long as people drink from it. From the mud at its bottom will come musk. And from its pebbles will come pearls, gold bars and various kinds of jewels." Glory be to the One Who creates whatever He pleases.

Some *aḥādīth* state that every prophet has a Fountain, but the Fountain of our Prophet (peace be on him) is the greatest and sweetest of them and will give drink to the largest number of people.[185] May Allah, by His grace and generosity, include us among them.

Abū 'Abdullah Al-Qurṭubī wrote in *At-Tadhkirah*, "Opinions differ regarding the Balance and the Fountain, as to which comes first. Some say that the Balance will come first. Others say that the Fountain will come first. Abū Al-Ḥassan Al-Qabisī says that the first opinion is correct." Al-Qurṭubī also supports it according to the

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[184]The commentator gave the meaning of the *ḥadīth* and not the exact wording found in Al-Bukhārī. See Al-Bukhārī, 7050.

[185]This *ḥadīth*, with somewhat different wording, occurs in At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2445. At-Tirmidhi's chain is weak. In *Majma' az-Zawā'id* (10:363), Al-Haythamī states that Aṭ-Ṭabarānī also recorded it and except for one transmitter of the *ḥadīth*, Marwān Ibn Ja'far As-Samarī, whose reliability is disputed, the other narrators are reliable. Al-Albānī concludes that the *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan* due to some supporting evidence he found for it.

meaning. He says that people will be thirsty when they come out of their graves, so they will go to the Fountain first and then to the Balance and the Bridge. Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī, *in Kashf 'Ilm al-Ākhirah*, narrates from some of the Elders who wrote on this topic that the Fountain will come after the Bridge. But this is a mistake, says Al-Ghazālī. Al-Qurṭubī said, "That is correct. You should not think that this is going to happen in this world. It will be on a different world, that will shine like silver, where no blood will be shed, no one will be wronged, and where Allah will come down for judgment."

May Allah curse those who deny the existence of the Fountain. They will be barred, I fear, from it on the Day of Judgment.

(48) *Ash-Shifā'ah* (intercession) that has been prepared on their (the Muslims') behalf is also a fact, as has been reported in the *aḥādīth*.

Intercession is of many varieties. Some of them are agreed upon by the Muslim nation. Concerning others, the Mu'tazilah and other heretics reject them. The first type is the first intercession and the greatest, and is the exclusive privilege of our Prophet (peace be on him) from among all his brother prophets and messengers (may Allah's blessings be upon all of them). There are many *aḥādīth* recorded in Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and other works about this intercession from a number of Companions.

From among those narrations is the narration of Abū Hurayrah, who said, "Once a lamb was brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him). A leg of lamb was offered to the Prophet as that was his favorite. He took some bites from it and then said, 'I will be the leader of the people on the Day of Judgment. Do you know why? Allah will gather everyone from the earliest to the latest times on a single plain (where an observer will be able to see all of them and they will be able to hear the announcer. And the sun will come near them. They will face a situation that they cannot bear.) Some people will say, 'Don't you see the condition you are in and the state that you have reached? Will you not seek one who can intercede with your Lord?' Some people will say, 'Appeal to your father, Adam.' They will go to him and say, 'Adam, you are the father of all mankind and Allah created you with His own Hands and breathed into you a spirit from Him, and commanded the angels to bow down to you and made you live in Paradise. Will you not intercede for us with your Lord? Don't you see in what a (miserable) state we are in and what kind of situation we have reached?'

"Adam will reply, 'My Lord is so angry, as He has never been before and will never be in the future. And He forbade me the tree but I disobeyed (Him). (I am worried about my) own self. Myself! Go to somebody else. Go to Noah.' Then they will go to Noah and say, 'Noah, you were the first of the messengers of Allah to the people of the earth, and Allah named you a thankful servant. Can't you see what a terrible state we are in and what a situation we have reached?' Noah will reply, 'Today my Lord is so angry, as He has never been angry before or will ever be angry again. I have myself to worry about. Myself! Go to someone else. Go to Abraham.'

"They will then say, 'Abraham, you are the prophet of Allah and His dear friend on earth. Can't you see our condition, how miserable it is?' He will say, 'My Lord is very angry today, as He has never been angry before or will ever be angry again.' He will then recall his misstatements and say, 'I fear for myself. I fear for myself. Go to Moses.' Then they will go to Moses and say, 'You were a messenger of Allah. Allah chose you for His message and spoke especially to you. Intercede for us with your Lord. Can't you see the state we are in? Can't you see what situation we have reached?' Moses will say to them, 'My Lord is very angry today, as He has never been before nor ever will be again. I killed someone whom I was not commanded to kill. I am worried about myself, myself, myself. Go to someone else. Go to Jesus.' "Then they will say, 'Jesus, you are a messenger of Allah and His word that He bestowed on Mary and a spirit from Him – the Prophet (peace be on him) then said, 'Jesus was just this – and you spoke to people while in the cradle. Intercede for us with your Lord. Can't you see what a miserable state we are in? Can't you see what a situation we have reached?' Jesus will say, 'My Lord is angry today, as He has never been before nor will ever be again.' And he will not mention any sin (on his part, but will say:) 'Go to someone else. Go to Muḥammad (peace be on him).'

"They will go to Muḥammad and say, 'Muḥammad, you are a messenger of Allah and the last prophet. Allah has forgiven you your past and future sins. Intercede for us with your Lord. Can't you see what a miserable state we are in? Can't you see the situation we have reached?' I will then stand and go to the Throne and bow down to my Lord, the Exalted. Then Allah will teach me some words that I did not know and inspire me to praise Him in words that were not given to anyone before me. He will say, 'Muḥammad, raise your head, ask and it will be given; intercede and your intercession will be accepted.' I will say, 'O Lord, my nation, my nation. O Lord, my nation, my nation. O Lord, my nation, my

nation.' He will say, 'For those of your nation who have no reckoning to face, enter them through the right door of Paradise. Others will enter Paradise through the other doors along with the rest of your followers. The Prophet (peace be on him) then said, 'By the One in Whose hand is my soul, the distance between the two sides of the door will be like the distance between Makkah and Hajar or between Makkah and Busra." [recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim; but with this particular wording it is only to be found in the *Musnad* of Ahmad].[186]

The most amazing thing is that some scholars who narrate this *ḥadīth* from more than one chain do not even mention the first intercession, in which Allah comes to decide the affairs among the people, as is mentioned in the *ḥadīth* about the Blowing of the Trumpet. But that is the point of the narration and it is what the beginning context alludes to. The people will seek intercession from Adam and the prophets after him to decide among the people. They will seek rescue from their place, as the text of the remaining narrations show. When they reach the place of gathering, that is when they will mention intercession concerning the sinners of the nation and their rescue from the Hell-fire.

It is as if the purpose of the Elders, narrating this *ḥadīth* in an abbreviated matter, was to refute the Khawārij and those who followed them from among the Mu'tazilah. Those are the people who reject the notion that anyone will be taken out of the Hell-fire after entering it. Therefore, they mention only that portion of the *ḥadīth* in which it clearly states the refutation of those people and their heresy that contradicts the *ḥadīth*.

This is explicitly mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of the Trumpet. If I did not fear that it would lengthen this work, I would include all of that *ḥadīth*. Some of the things it mentions are that they will go to Adam, then Noah, then Abraham, then Moses, then Jesus, and then come to the Messenger of Allah Muḥammad (peace be on them all). He will go and bow down under the Throne in a place called Al-Faḥṣ. Allah will say, "What is the matter?" although He is fully informed of it. The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) will say, "O Lord, You promised me intercession, so my intercession is concerning Your creation. Judge among them." Allah, the Most High, will say, "That is your intercession. I will bring them and judge among all of you." He then will say, "Go back and wait among the people."

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[186]Aḥmad, 2:435-436.

Then it mentions the splitting of the heavens. The angels will descend among clouds and then the Lord, Glorified and Most High, will come and decide the matter. The angels that are closest to Allah will be singing His praises in a special manner. Allah will place His footstool wherever He wishes on His earth. Then He will say, "I have been silent to you since I created you until this day, listening to your statements and watching your deeds, so be silent for me. Here are your deeds and here are your records that will be read to you. Whoever finds good should thank Allah. Whoever finds other than that should not blame anyone except himself."

Then the *ḥadīth* states, when the people of Paradise arrive at Paradise, they will say, "Who will intercede for us with our Lord to enter Paradise?" They will say, "Who has more right to that than your father, the one created by Allah's hand and into whom He breathed a spirit from Him and spoke to directly." So they will go to Adam and seek that from him. Then the Prophet (peace be on him) mentioned Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and then Muḥammad (peace be on him). Finally, the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "They will come to Paradise and I will take hold of the ring of the door. Then I will seek to open the door. It will be opened for me and I will be welcomed therein. When I enter, I will see my Lord and fall prostrate. Then I will be permitted to praise Allah in a manner that was not taught to any of His creation. Then Allah will say to me, 'Get up, Muḥammad. Intercede and your intercession will be accepted. Ask and it will be given." When I raise my head, Allah will say – and He knows best: 'What is your purpose?' I will say, 'O Lord, you promised me intercession. I intercede for the people of Paradise to enter Paradise.' Allah then will say, 'I accept your intercession. And I permit them to enter Paradise...'" The imams, Ibn Jarīr, in his *Tafsīr*, Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, Abū Ya'la Al-Mawsalī, Al-Bayhaqī and others recorded this *ḥadīth*.[187]

The second and third forms of intercession concern the Prophet's intercession for those people whose good and bad deeds are equal. He will intercede on their behalf to have them enter Paradise, and he will also intercede for other people who were ordered to go to Hell but due to the intercession of the Prophet (peace be on him) they will be spared.

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[187]This is a very lengthy *ḥadīth*. In its chain is Ismā'īl Ibn Rafī, who is weak, and Muḥammad Ibn Yazīd or Ziyād, who is unknown. In his commentary on the Qur'ān, Ibn Kathīr called this *ḥadīth* "very strange".

The fourth type of the Prophet's intercession will be for raising the ranks of those who enter Paradise above the level they deserve from their actions. The Mu'tazilah accept only this type of intercession and they reject all the other forms, although they are confirmed in *mutawātir aḥādīth*.

The fifth type of intercession refers to intercession to allow some people to enter Paradise without any reckoning. The best evidence for this type of intercession is the *ḥadīth* of 'Ukāshah Ibn Miḥsan, in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated for him to be among those seventy thousand who will enter Paradise without any reckoning. This *ḥadīth* is recorded in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[188]

The sixth form of intercession concerns lightening the punishments of those who deserve it, like the Prophet's interceding for his uncle Abū Ṭālib's punishment to be lightened.[189] After mentioning this type of intercession, Al-Qurṭubī stated in *At-Tadhkirah*, "One might say, 'But Allah says, "No intercession by any intercessor will protect them"' [74:48]. The response to that is that the intercession certainly will not rescue the non-believers from Hell, but it will rescue the Believers from the Fire and allow them to be admitted into Paradise."[190]

The seventh kind of intercession refers to the Prophet (peace be on him) asking permission for all the Believers to enter Paradise, as mentioned earlier. In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* it is recorded from Anas that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "ĪI will be the first to intercede for admitting people to Paradise."[191]

The eighth form of intercession is the Prophet's intercession for the people of his nation who committed great sins and were sent to Hell. He will intercede for their release from Hell. This type of intercession has been mentioned in *aḥādīth* that reach the level of being *mutawātir*. Perhaps the Khawārij and Mu'tazilah were not aware of that fact and therefore they held a differing opinion, being ignorant of the authenticity of these *aḥādīth* and refuting those who were knowledgeable of them, thus continuing in their heresy. Actually, this type of intercession is also performed by the angels, prophets and other Believers. The Prophet (peace be on him) will be given four opportunities to exercise this type of intercession.

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188 Al-Bukhārī, 5811, 6542; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 216, 217.

189 Al-Bukhārī, 3883; Muslim, *Ash-Shifā'ah*, 209; Al-Ḥumaydī, 460.

190 Al-Qurṭubī, *At-Tadhkirah*, 1:249.

191 Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 196; Ad-Dārimī, 1:27; Aḥmad, 3:140.

From the *ḥadīth* on this topic is the *ḥadīth* of Anas Ibn Mālik who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "My intercession will be for the people of my nation who committed great sins" [recorded by Imām Ahmad].[192]

Al-Bukhārī recorded in the *Book of Tawḥīd* (of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*) that Sulaymān Ibn Ḥarb narrated to us that Hamad Ibn Zayd narrated to us that Ma'bad Ibn Hilāl Al-'Anazī said, "The people of Basrah gathered and went to Anas Ibn Mālik. Thābit Al-Bunānī went with us. We asked Anas about the *ḥadīth* of intercession. Anas was in his house. We decided that we would see him when he prayed the *dhuhr* (noon) prayer. We asked for his permission to enter and he gave it to us and he was sitting on his carpet. We said to Thābit, 'Do not ask him about anything else before asking him about the intercession.' (He said, 'Abū Hamzah, these people, your brothers from Basrah, have come to you to ask you about the *ḥadīth* of intercession.) He said, 'Muḥammad (peace be on him) told us:

"When it is the Day of Resurrection, people will be wandering in distress. They will go to Adam and say, 'Intercede for us with your Lord.' He will say, 'That is not for me, but you should go to Abraham, as he is the beloved friend of the Merciful.' They will go to Abraham and he will say, 'That is not for me. Go go Moses, for he is the one whom Allah spoke to directly.' So they will go to Moses and he will say, 'That is not for me to do, but you must go to Jesus; he is the spirit of Allah and His word.' They will then come to Jesus and he will say, 'That is not for me to do, but you must go to Muḥammad.' Then they will come to me and I will say, 'This is for me to do. I will ask permission from my Lord and He will give me permission. He will put in my heart some words of praise which I do not know now. I will praise Him with those words, then I will fall prostrate to Him. The call will come, "Muḥammad, raise your head. Speak and you will be heard. Intercede and your intercession will be fulfilled. Ask and it will be given."

"'ī will say, "O Lord, my nation, my nation." It will be said, "Go, take out whoever has a grain of faith in his heart." I will then go and do so. Then I will return and praise Allah (again) with those words of praise. Then I will fall prostrate to Him. It will be said, "Muḥammad, raise your head. Speak and you will be heard. Intercede and your intercession will be fulfilled. Ask and it will be

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[192] Aḥmad, 3:213; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4739; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat Yawm al-Qiyāmah*, 2436; Ibn Ḥibban, 2596. It is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

given." I will say, "O Lord, my nation, my nation." It will be said, "Go, take out whoever has a even a particle of faith in his heart." I will then go and do so. Then I will return and praise Allah (again) with those words of praise. Then I will fall prostrate to Him. It will be said, "Muḥammad, raise your head. Speak and you will be heard. Intercede and your intercession will be fulfilled. Ask and it will be given." I will say, "O Lord, my nation, my nation." It will be said, "Go, take out whoever has even the tiniest, tiniest amount of faith in his heart and take him out of the Hell-fire." I will go and do so.'"

'Thābit said, "When we left Anas, I said, 'We should pass by Al-Ḥassan; he has hidden himself in the house of Abū Khalīfah,[193] and tell him about what Anas just narrated to us.' We went to him and greeted him. He gave us permission to enter. We said to him, 'Abū Sa'īd, we are coming to you from Anas Ibn Mālik. We have not seen anything like what he narrated to us about the intercession.' He asked what he said. We then proceeded to narrate the *ḥadīth* to him. We came to the end of it, and he said, 'What else did he say?' We said, 'He did not add anything to that for us.' He said, 'Anas has narrated that entire *ḥadīth* to me for twenty years. I do not know if he forgot the rest of it or was afraid to tell you the rest of it lest you rely on it solely (and not work).' We said, 'Abū Sa'īd, narrate it to us.' He laughed and then said, 'Mankind has been created hasty. I only said that to you because I want to narrate it to you.'

"He (the Prophet, peace be on him) then said, 'I will return a fourth time and praise Allah (again) with those words of praise. Then I will fall prostrate to Him. It will be said: 'Muḥammad, raise your head. Speak and you will be heard. Intercede and your intercession will be fulfilled. Ask and it will be given.' 'I will say, "O Lord, give me permission concerning all of those who said, 'There is no one worthy of worship except Allah' (to take them out of Hell)." He, the Most High, will say, 'By My honor and glory, by My majesty and greatness, I will take out from the Fire whoever has said, "There is no god except Allah."'"" This is the wording of the *ḥadīth* in Muslim's narration.[194]

The *ḥadīth* scholar Abū Ya'la narrated from 'Uthmān that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "Three (groups of

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[193]He was hiding in order to evade Al-Hajāj Ibn Yūsuf Ath-Thaqafī.

[194]Al-Bukhārī, 7510; Muslim, 193, 326; Ibn Mājah, 4312; Aḥmad, 3:116, 244, 247, 248.

people) will intercede on the Day of Judgment, the prophets, then the scholars and then the martyrs."[195]

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, there is a *ḥadīth* from Abū Sa'īd from the Prophet (peace be on him) who said, "Allah will say, 'The angels have interceded; the prophets have interceded; the Believers have interceded. The only one left is the Most Merciful of the Merciful. He will then take a handful from the Hell-fire and will release therefrom a people who never did any good deeds..."[196]

People are divided into three opinions concerning the issue of intercession. The polytheists, the Christians, the extreme heretics who revere Ṣūfī masters to excess, and others consider intercession with Allah by those whom they consider revered in a way similar to the kind of intercession that takes place in this world. The Mu'tazilah and Khawārij reject the notion of our Prophet's or others' intercession for those who committed great sins. As for the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, they affirm the notion of our Prophet's intercession for the people who committed great sins, as well as the intercession of others, but no one will be allowed to intercede except with Allah's permission, and He will specify the people who will be interceded for, as is stated in authentic *aḥādīth*, such as the *ḥadīth* of intercession which says, "They will go to Adam, then Noah, then Abraham, then Moses, then Jesus, and Jesus will say to them, 'Go to Muḥammad, for he is a servant whose past and later sins were forgiven by Allah.' Then they will come to me and I shall go. When I see my Lord, I shall fall prostrate to Him. And I shall praise Him with words of praise that He shall give to me that I cannot state now. He will say, 'Muḥammad, raise your head. Speak and you will be listened to. Intercede, and your intercession will be accepted.' Then I will say, 'O my Lord, my nation.' Then He will state the people for me and I will enter them into Paradise. Then I shall go and bow down and He will state some people for me...' He mentioned that three times."[197]

As for praying to Allah in the name of the Prophet (peace be on him) or anyone else in this world, the matter needs some detail. If

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[195]Recorded by Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4313. Al-'Uqaylī mentioned the *ḥadīth* in *Kutab ad-Du'ā'fa al-Kabīr* ('Abdul-Mu'ṭī Amin Qala'jī, ed.; Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyyah, 1404/1984), vol. 3, p. 67. He said that one of its narrators, 'Anbasah Ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān, is to be avoided, according to Al-Bukhārī, while Abū Ḥātim called him a forger, and the person he narrated the *ḥadīth* from is unknown. Al-Albānī concludes that this *ḥadīth* is fabricated.

[196]Part of a long *ḥadīth* in Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 183, 302; Aḥmad, 3:94.

[197]Part of the long *ḥadīth* on intercession referred to earlier.

the supplicator says, "By the right of Your prophet (upon You)" or "By the right of so-and-so" and swears by a created being to impress on Allah to answer his supplication, that act is to be avoided for two reasons. First, it is a kind of swearing by someone other than Allah. Second, it involves the belief that someone has some right over Allah. It is not allowed to swear by anyone other than Allah, and no one has any right over Allah except what He has laid down for Himself, as in Allah's saying, "It was incumbent upon Us to aid those who believed" [30:47].

Also, in the confirmed *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim when the Prophet (peace be on him) said to Mu'ādh while he was riding behind him on an animal, "Mu'ādh, do you know what is the right of Allah upon His servants?" He answered, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "His right upon them is that they should worship Him and not ascribe anything as a partner to Him. Do you know what the right of the servants is upon Allah if they do such a thing?" He said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He told him, "Their right upon Him is that He should not punish them."[198] That right is an obligation according to His perfect words and His truthful promise. Furthermore, it is not the case that the servant himself has any such right upon Allah, as one created being might have over another created being. Allah is the real benefactor of man for any good which he receives from anyone. The obligatory right that they have is due to His promise not to punish them. The fact that He will not punish them is not something one can swear by, nor may Allah be invoked in its name or on its account. In fact, nothing is a means to something except what He has made a means to it.

Similarly, a *ḥadīth* in the *Musnad* from Abū Sa'īd from the Prophet (peace be on him) reports that a man who was walking to prayer said, "I beseech You by the right of this walking of mine and by the right of those who beseech You."[199] This is the right of the beseechers that Allah has made incumbent upon Himself. It therefore behooves Him to respond to their prayer and reward their worship. A poet spoke well when he said:

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[198] Al-Bukhārī, 2856, 5967, 26267, 6500, 7373; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 30; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2645; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4296; Aḥmad, 3:260, 261.

[199] Aḥmad, 3:21; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Masājid,* 778. Ibn As-Sunnī has said that two of the transmitters of this *ḥadīth*, Fudayl Ibn Marzūq and 'Ati'ah Al- Awfī, are weak. Hence the *ḥadīth* is weak. Ibn As-Sunnī, *'Amal al-Yawm wa al-Laylah*, 83. Also see Al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth adh-Dhā'ifah wa al-Mawḍū'ah* (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1392/1972), *ḥadīth* no. 24.

Men have no rights over Allah,
And nothing done for Him goes unrewarded.
If men are punished, His justice requires it;
If they are rewarded, it is simply His grace.
And His grace knows no bounds.

One may ask: What is the difference between the words "by the right of those who beseech You" and the words "by the right of Your Prophet"?[200] The answer is that the first one amounts to saying "by the right of those who beseech You whose prayers You have promised to hear and, as I am one of them, please grant my prayer." On the other hand, the phrase "By the right of so-and-so," even if he had a right over Allah on account of a promise that He had made to him, has no relation to Allah's responding to the supplication of the supplicator. It is as if he said, "Since so-and-so is one of your devoted servants, answer my prayer." What is the relationship between the two and what requires the other to be answered? This is actually an act of trespassing the limits of supplications. Allah has said, "Call on your Lord with humility and in private; for He does not like those who trespass the limits" [7:55]. The above manner of beseeching Allah is an innovation. It has never been narrated from the Prophet (peace be on him), any of his Companions, nor any of the Successors and not from any of the *imāms*; it is only found in the temples and amulets that are written by ignorant people and Ṣūfī tarīqahs.

Supplication is one of the greatest acts of worship. Worship must be founded upon the Sunnah and obedience (to said Sunnah) and not upon personal whims or innovations.

If by saying, "by the right of so-and-so" one's intention is to adjure Allah to do something in his name, that, too, is forbidden. To adjure someone other than Allah in the name of a created being is not allowed; therefore, what about adjuring the Creator in the name of a creature? The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever swears by anything other than Allah has associated (partners) with Him."[201] That it is why Abū Ḥanīfah and his two companions said that it is disliked for the supplicator to say, "I ask you by the right of so-and-so, by the right of your prophets and messengers, by the right of the Inviolable Mosque, or by the right of *al-mash'ar al-ḥarām*," and so

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[200]Note that the *ḥadīth* the first phrase is based on is weak, as mentioned above. Therefore, there is no real need to respond to this question.

[201]Aḥmad, 2:34, 69, 87, 125; Abū Dāwūd, 3251; At-Tirmidhī, *An-Nudhūr*, 1535; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:18. It is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

on. In fact, Abū Ḥanīfah and Muḥammad disliked for anyone to say, "O Allah, I ask you in the name of the seat of Your glory, the Throne," but Abū Yūsuf did not dislike such a statement after he had heard a narration concerning it.[202]

If a person should say, "I beseech You in the name of the status that so-and-so has with You," or "I seek a means to You through Your prophets, messengers and devoted servants," and he thinks that so-and-so has a place of honor with Allah that he should invoke Allah through him, such a statement is forbidden. Had this been the practice of the Companions during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be on him) they would have continued doing likewise after his death. But they used to seek a means to Allah during his lifetime through the Prophet's own supplications.[203] They used to ask him to pray for them. Then they would say, "Amen" to his supplications, as was the case in *al-istisqā* (the prayer for rain) and other times. When the Prophet (peace be on him) died, 'Umar said, when they went out to make the prayer for rain, "O Allah, when we did not have rain we asked the Prophet to pray for us and You gave us rain. Now we ask you through the uncle of the Prophet."[204] Then he asked 'Abbās to pray for them and to beseech Allah. He did not adjure Allah to give rain in the name or position which 'Abbās had in Allah's sight. If that had been the case, the Companions would have done it by the Prophet's position and honor, as he definitely had a greater and more honorable position with Allah than 'Abbās.

Some say in prayer, "I ask You in the name of my obedience to Your Messenger and love for him," or "by my belief in him and the rest of Your prophets and messengers and my believing in them," and so on. This is one of the best types of supplications, means of approach and seeking intercession.

The words, "seeking approach to Allah by a certain person" are somewhat vague. Some people make mistakes based on these words because they do not understand their meanings. If you ask someone to pray and supplicate for you while he is alive, that is permissible.

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[202]See Ad-Durr al-Mukhtār with the commentary *Radd al-Muhtar*, 6:395-397. The tradition which Abū Yūsuf seemed to have relied upon was considered by Ibn Al-Jawzī to be fabricated. See Az-Zayla'ī, *Nasb ar-Rayah* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-Islāmīyyah, 1393/1973), 4:272-3. Al-Albānī and Al-Arnawūṭ are in agreement with Ibn Al-Jawzī concerning this *ḥadīth*.

[203]For a discussion of this point, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Iqtiḍā aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* (Muḥammad Hāmid Al-Fiqī, ed.; Cairo: Maktabat as-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyyah, 1369), pp. 398ff.

[204]Al-Bukhārī, 1010, 3710; Ibn Ḥibban, 2861; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 84.

But if you love and follow someone and he deserves to be loved and followed, and you ask him to pray and supplicate for you in the name of his being worthy of praying and supplicating or in the name of your love for him or if you swear by him, then this is improper or forbidden. Similar is the case when you pray in the name of something and take it as a means or swear by it.

An example of the first type is the story of the three young men who sought shelter in a cave. This is a well-known *ḥadīth* recorded by Al-Bukhārī, Muslim and others. A boulder fell and closed the opening to the cave upon them. They approached Allah by mentioning some good deeds they had done sincerely for His sake. Each of them said, "If You know that I did that seeking Your countenance, rescue us from the situation which we are in." Finally, the boulder was removed and they walked out of the cave.[205] These people prayed to Allah through their pious deeds, and pious deeds do contribute to the acceptance of a prayer. Allah has promised that He will grant the prayers of those who have faith in Him and do good deeds, and that He will increase His favors upon them.

In sum, intercession with Allah is not like intercession between human beings. One who intercedes with a man not only pleads for the petitioner but also joins in his prayer. There are then two who pray. He also joins the intercessor, because with his intercession he becomes a co-granter of the object that is requested. In short, he joins the petitioner as well as the petitioned. But Allah is one, without a second. No one can therefore intercede with Him without His prior permission. He is in full control of everything. No one shares with Him in anything. That it is why the chief intercessor will bow down before Allah on the Day of Judgment and praise Him. Only then will He say, "Raise your head, speak and you will be heard. Ask and you will be given. Intercede and it will be granted." Allah will determine the categories of people whom the Prophet (peace be on him) will take out of Hell and enter into Paradise. Thus, everything is in the hands of Allah, as He has said, "Say: Indeed, this affair is completely Allah's" [3:159]; "Not for you, but for Allah is the decision" [3:128]; and, "Is it not His to create and to rule" [7:54].

Although no one can intercede with Him except for one He permits and for whomsoever He wills, He has given the intercessor the honor of having his intercession accepted. The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "Intercede and you shall be rewarded

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[205]Al-Bukhārī, 2215, 2272, 2333, 3465, 5974; Muslim, *Adh-Dhikr*, 2743; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Buyū'*. 3387; Aḥmad, 2:116.

for it. Allah commands through the tongue of His Prophet what He wills."[206] In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Tribe of Manāf, I cannot save you from (the punishment of) Allah. Ṣafīyyah, aunt of the Prophet of Allah, I cannot save you from Allah. 'Abbās, uncle of the Prophet of Allah, I cannot save you."[207] Another *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* records that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I should not see any of you coming on the Day of Judgment carrying on your shoulders a camel braying or a goat bleating or a skin waving, and saying, 'Save me!' I will say, 'I have conveyed to you the message. Now I cannot do anything for you.'"[208] If the best and greatest of all the intercessors says to his dearest ones, "I cannot save you from Allah," what do you think will be the situation for everybody else?

When someone prays for anybody or intercedes for him, and Allah hears his prayer and grants his request, he did not at all effect the realization of the object prayed for in the same way it occurs in the human context. It is Allah Who has made him pray and intercede. It is He Who creates his acts. It is also He Who first inspired the sinner to repent and then He accepts his repentance. He is the One Who inspires him to do good deeds and then rewards him for them. He is the One Who inspired the person to pray and then He grants his prayer. This is based on the foundations of the beliefs of the Ahl as-Sunnah who believe in predestination and that Allah is the Creator of all things.

(49) The covenant that Allah made with Adam and his descendants is a fact.

Allah has said, "And remember the day when your Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying:) Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes, we do testify to that. That was lest you should say on the Day of Judgment: Of this, we were unaware" [7:172]. Thus Allah has stated that He brought out the children of Adam from their loins testifying concerning themselves that Allah is their Lord and their Master and that there is no god but Allah. A

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[206]Al-Bukhārī, 1432, 6027, 6028; Muslim, *Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, 2627; At-Tirmidhī, 2674; Abū Dāwūd, 5131; An-Nasā'ī, 5:77-78; Aḥmad, 4:400, 409, 413; Al-Ḥumaydī, 771.

[207]Al-Bukhārī, 2753, 3527, 4771; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 204; Aḥmad, 2:333, 350, 360, 398, 399; An-Nasā'ī, 6:248, 249, 250.

[208]Part of a long *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī, 3073; Muslim, 1831; Aḥmad, 2:426.

number of *aḥādīth* also mention that the Children of Adam were brought out from his loins and "the people of the right hand" were separated from "the people of the left hand". Some of the *aḥādīth* also mention that they were made to testify that Allah is their Lord.

Among these *aḥādīth* is the *ḥadīth* recorded by Ahmad, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, who narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah made a covenant with the offspring of Adam on the plane of 'Arafah. He took out from his loins all the children whose seed He had sown in him. He spread them before him and addressed them directly and said, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we testify to that.'" The Prophet (peace be on him) then recited the rest of the verse, "(This was) lest you should say on the Day of Judgment: 'Of this, we were unaware,' or lest you should say: 'Our fathers before us may have taken false gods, but we are their descendants after them. Will you then destroy us because of the deeds of men who were futile?'" [7:172-173]. This *ḥadīth* was also recorded by Al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim. Al-Ḥākim recorded it in *Al-Mustadrak* and said, "Its chain is authentic, but Al-Bukhārī and Muslim did not record it."[209]

Imām Aḥmad has recorded another *ḥadīth* which states that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb was asked about the above-mentioned verse. He said that the Prophet (peace be on him) was asked about it and he said, "Allah created Adam, touched his back with His right hand, brought out a group of his descendants, and said, 'I have created these people for Paradise, and they will do the work of the people of Paradise.' He touched his back again and brought out another group of his descendants and said, 'I have created these for Hell, and they will do the work of the people of Hell.'" Then a man said, "Messenger of Allah, why should we do deeds then?" He answered, "When Allah, the Most High, creates a man for Paradise, He engages him in the deeds of the people of Paradise until he dies doing those deeds and enters (on that account) Paradise. But when He creates a man for Hell, He engages him in the deeds of the people of Hell until he dies doing those deeds and enters him on that account into the Fire."[210] This *ḥadīth* was also recorded by Abū

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[209] Aḥmad, 1:272; *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, 15338; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, pp. 326-327; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 2:325. See also Al-Haythamī, *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, 7:25. Al-Albānī says this *ḥadīth* is authentic.

[210] Aḥmad, 1:44-45.

Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī, Al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Jarīr and by Ibn Ḥibban in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.[211]

At-Tirmidhī has recorded another *ḥadīth* from Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "When Allah created Adam he touched his back, whereupon all his descendants that Allah will create until the Day of Resurrection came out of his back. He put a speck of light between the eyes of each one and presented them to Adam. 'Who are these people?' Adam asked. 'They are your children,' He replied. Adam looked at one of them whose light impressed him the most. He asked, 'Lord, who is this? He said, 'This is one of your later descendants, and his name is David.' He asked, 'What is his lifespan?' 'Sixty years,' He replied. Thereupon Adam requested, 'Lord, take forty years from my life and add them to his.' But at the time of his death, when the angel approached him, he said, 'Don't I still have forty more years?' the angel said, 'Didn't you give them to your descendant, David?'" Then the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Thus Adam refused, and his children refused after him. He forgot, and his children also forgot. He erred, and his children also erred." At-Tirmidhī said after recording this *ḥadīth*, "It is *hasanṣaḥīḥ*." Al-Ḥākim also recorded it and said, "It is authentic according to the conditions of Muslim, although neither he nor Al-Bukhārī recorded it."[212]

Imām Aḥmad also recorded another *ḥadīth* on the authority of Anas Ibn Mālik, who narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "One of the people marked for Hell will be asked on the Day of Judgment, 'If you had everything that is on the earth, would you be willing to give it as ransom for your own sake? He will say, 'Yes.' Then Allah will tell him, 'ī asked you for something much less than that. I made a covenant with you when you were in Adam's loins not to associate any partner with Me. But you refused and insisted on associating partners with me.'" This *ḥadīth* was also recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[213]

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[211]Abū Dāwūd, 4703; At-Tirmidhī, 3075; An-Nasā'ī in Al-Kubra (as quoted by Al-Mizzī in *Tuhfat al-Ashraf*, 8:114); Ibn Ḥibban, 6133; *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, 15357; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ 'Aqīdat Ahl as-Sunnah*, 990; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 77. Al-Albānī stated that this *ḥadīth* is authentic due to supporting evidence, except for the statement, "He touched his back", for which he found no supporting evidence.

[212]At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr*, 3078; Ibn Ḥibban, 5134; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, p. 324; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:64, 2:325. According to Al-Albānī, it is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[213]Aḥmad, 3:127, 129, 218; Al-Bukhārī, 3334, 6538, 6557; Muslim, *Al-Munafiqūn*, 2805.

In addition, there are yet other *aḥādīth* that show that Allah took Adam's descendants from his loins and that He differentiated between the people of Hell and the people of Paradise.[214]

On the basis of these *aḥādīth*, some people say that the souls are created before the bodies. But these traditions do not say that the souls continued to exist after they were first brought out. The most that they say is that their Creator and Originator shaped their souls, fixed their forms, determined their ages and deeds, and took them out from their source and then put them back. He also fixed the time that each individual soul would come into existence. They do not state that Allah created them at that time with a permanent existence and then kept them in one place, after which He will put them into their bodies, one after the other, as their time became due. Ibn Ḥazm is of the above opinion but the *aḥādīth* do not prove that. It is true that Allah, Glorified be He, created one group of people after that, according to a predetermined plan and they will appear in existence accordingly. This is also true for every one of His creatures. He has determined their measures, ages, properties and forms; then He brings them into existence according to the fixed plan.

What is narrated on this topic only refers to what has been stated above. Some of them show that Allah also brought out their semblances and images and separated the happy ones from the wretched.

As for their bearing witness, this occurs in the two statements of Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Amr,[215] may Allah be pleased with them. This is why a number of people, both of the Elders and later generations, say that the covenant referred to is that Allah created the souls with knowledge of His Oneness (*tawḥīd*), as was mentioned earlier in the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah. The meaning of Allah's words, "We bear witness" is, 'Certainly we bear witness that You are our Lord.' This is the opinion of Ibn 'Abbās and Ubayy Ibn Ka'b. Ibn 'Abbās also said, "They testify against one another." Some say that, "We bear witness" is a statement of the angels. Such people stop at the word, "certainly". This is the opinion of Mujāhid, Ad-Duḥḥāk and As-Sudī. As-Sudī also stated, "This is a statement from Allah Himself and His angels that they bear witness to the children of Adam testifying to that." the first opinion is apparently more correct. The

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[214]See As-Suyūṭī, *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr fī at-Tafsīr bi al-Ma'thūr* (Beirut: M. Amin Danj, 1314/1896), 3:141-145; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 2:261-264; Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ar-Rūḥ* (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Islāmīyyah, 1402/19820, pp. 211-216.

[215]The *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās was mentioned earlier. For the *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Amr, see *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, 15354, 15355, 15356.

other statements are mere suppositions that do not have any evidence for them. The evident meaning of the verse supports the first opinion.

One should note that some of the commentators on the Qur'ān mention only the first statement that Allah will take the children of Adam out from his loins and they will bear witness against themselves and then they will be returned. This was the course of Ath-Tha'labī, Al-Baghawī and others. Some of them do not even mention that. They say that Allah planted in them the evidence concerning His Oneness in Lordship and Godhood and their minds and reason bear witness to what Allah has demonstrated for them. This was the approach of Az-Zamakhsharī and others. Some mention both opinions, such as Al-Wāḥidī, Ar-Rāzī, Al-Qurṭubī and others. But Ar-Rāzī ascribes the first opinion to the Ahl as-Sunnah and the second opinion to the Mu'tazilah.

Certainly the verse does not actually support the first opinion, that is that they were taken from Adam's loins. All it states is that they were taken from the loins of the Children of Adam. The mention of them being taken from Adam's loins and the evidence for it is in some *aḥādīth*. Some such *aḥādīth* mention them being taken out, and that some are decreed for Paradise and some are decreed for Hell, as in the *ḥadīth* of 'Umar. Some mention them being taken out and Adam looking at them without any mention of any kind of decree or testimonial, as in the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah. The reports that state them bearing witness – in the manner described in the first opinion above – are only those statements that come from Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Amr (and not from the Prophet, peace be on him). The *ḥadīth* scholars have some doubt about those narrations. None of the compilers of *ṣaḥīḥ aḥādīth* recorded it save Al-Ḥākim in *Al-Mustadrak*, and Al-Ḥākim is well known for being lax when it comes to including non-authentic *aḥādīth* in his collection.

The *ḥadīth* that states that some are decreed to go to Paradise and some are decreed to go to Hell points to the question of predestination. This has considerable evidence for it. There is no dispute over this issue among the Ahl as-Sunnah. The heretical Qadarīyyah sect differ from them on this point.

As for the first point, there is a dispute concerning this matter between the Elders and later scholars of the Ahl as-Sunnah. If I had not decided to be brief, I would have recorded all of the *aḥādīth* concerning that matter and what is said regarding it, and the reasonable statements and verses that point to it.

Al-Qurṭubī said this verse is problematic. The scholars have discussed its interpretation. We will mention what they say in

accordance with what I have come across. Some people say that the meaning of the verse is that Allah took from the loins of the children of Adam, one from the other. (Some say) the meaning of, "And they bear witness against themselves, 'Am I not your Lord'" that by His creation, He is pointing to His Oneness because every adult person knows of necessity that he has just one Lord. ("Am I not your Lord") implies that that statement is taking the place of their testimony against themselves (and they are admitting to it). As Allah says about the heavens and the earth, "Come, both of you, willingly" [41:11]. This was the opinion of Al-Qafal and Atnab. Some say that Allah took the souls out before He created the bodies and He gave them the knowledge to understand what He was saying to them. Then Al-Qurṭubī later quoted some *aḥādīth* that were related to this matter.

The strongest evidence for the first opinion is the *ḥadīth* of Anas that is recorded in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. That *ḥadīth* has Allah saying, "I wanted something from you which was much easier than that. I took an oath from you when you were in Adam's loins not to worship anyone with Me. But you refused and you associated partners with Me." But this *ḥadīth* was narrated through a different chain with the wording, "I asked for less than that from you and something easier but you did not do it, so go to the Hell-fire." In that narration, it does not say anything about Adam's loins. Furthermore, the first narration does not mention taking them from Adam's loins in the manner described by the people of the first opinion.

In fact, the first opinion implies two very strange things. First, it means that the people were speaking at that time, they affirmed faith, and by that the proof is established against them on the Day of Judgment. Second, (they claim) that the verse points to that opinion, but it does not for many reasons. First, the verse says, "from the children of Adam" and does not say, "from Adam". And the verse says, "from their backs" and not "from his back". And that is substitution of the part for the whole or a substitution of implication. The latter is a better interpretation. Third, the verse says, "from their descendants" and not "from his descendants". Fourth, the verse says, "and they testified against themselves" (i.e., 'He made them witnesses against themselves'). But a witness must recall what he is witnessing. It is a reference to his witness after he entered this world, as will be shown later, and does not mention any testimony before that.

Fifth, Allah mentions that the wisdom behind that testimony was to establish the proof against them so that they could not say on the

Day of Judgment, "Lo, of this we were unaware." But the proof is established against them by the messengers and the natural inclinations that Allah has created in people. As Allah says, "...messengers of good cheer and of warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers" [4:165].

Sixth, they are reminded of that so they will not be able to say, "Lo, of this we were unaware." It is well known that they are unaware of all being brought out from Adam's loins and bearing testimony at that time; none of them recall that.

Seventh, Allah says, "Or lest you should say: 'It is only that our fathers ascribed partners to Allah of old and we were their seed after them'" [7:173]. Two points of wisdom were mentioned concerning their being taken out and testifying: they could not claim to be unaware and they could not use following their fathers as an excuse. The unaware has no idea of what is going on, and the follower follows someone else in what he is doing. These two points of wisdom would be non-existent if the proof were not through the messengers and the natural inclination (*fiṭrah*).

Eighth, Allah says, "'Will you destroy us on account of what those who follow falsehood did?'" [7:173]. If they were to be punished for their arrogance and polytheism, they could say that, but Allah punishes them for refusing to follow His messengers and for denying His messengers. (If Allah were to punish them for blindly following their fathers in idolatry without establishing the proof against them through messengers, He would have destroyed them on account of the actions of those who acting falsely; or He would have destroyed them although they were unaware of the wrong that they were doing;) but Allah stated that He does not destroy a town unjustly while their people are unaware: He destroys them only after warning by sending messengers.

Ninth, Allah made everyone testify against himself that He is their Lord and Creator. And Allah uses that testimony as proof against them in numerous places in the Qur'ān. For example, Allah says, "If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will say, 'Allah'" [31:25]. This is the proof that they testified to against themselves and which they are reminded of by Allah's messengers. Allah says, "Is there any doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth?" [19:10].

Tenth, He has made that a sign that clearly and unquestionably points to its conclusion (to the extent that none of the evidence points to anything else). This is the nature of Allah's signs. (They point to a particular and necessary conclusion based on knowledge thereof.) Allah says, "Thus We detail Our revelations, that haply they may return" [7:174]. This is based on the natural instincts and

inclinations upon which Allah has created mankind and there is no change in Allah's creation. There is no infant that was not born according to that human nature. No infant is born in accordance with any other nature. That is something that he has no control over. There will never be any change or alteration in that. We pointed out the evidence for that earlier. Allah knows best.

Ibn Atiya and others were blessed to come to this conclusion. But they dreaded differing with the apparent meaning of the *ḥadīth* that clearly states that Allah took them out (from Adam) and made them testify against themselves and then returned them. This is why Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī quoted both opinions in *Sharḥ at-Ta'wilāt* and concluded that the second opinion is stronger. He discussed it and leaned towards that opinion.

No doubt the affirmation of belief in one Lord is part of human nature. Polytheism (*shirk*), on the other hand, is something introduced and alien to its nature. Children learn polytheism from their parents. If, on the Day of Judgment, they try to plead that their fathers practiced polytheism and they merely were following them as they did in other matters such as eating, clothing and housing, it will be said to them, "You knew the truth about the Creator. You accepted that Allah is your Lord without any partners, and you testified to that against yourself." the testimony of a person against himself can only be his admitting to something. Allah says in the Qur'ān, "Believers, stand firmly for justice, as witnesses for Allah, even if against yourselves" [4:135]. This does not mean that one must say, "I testify against myself such-and-such," but it means to confess it. (On the Day of Judgment) you will be asked, "Why did you abandon that knowledge and conviction that you bore witness to against yourself for polytheism (*shirk*)? In fact, you have gone from something known and confirmed to something that you have no knowledge about in reality, following those who have no authority over you (in matters that you need not follow them) as opposed to the worldly customs – concerning those things you may not have had any knowledge that they are evil and they may have contained some benefit for you. But that is not the case with polytheism (there is no benefit to it and you know its evil). You bore witness and you had the knowledge to know that it is evil but you turned away from the truth."

The religion which a child takes from his parents is a pattern of habits and behavior meant to promote happiness in this world. A child obviously has to have someone to look after him. The people who have the most right to that is his parents. Therefore, Islamic law considers the child to be following the religion of his parents with respect to laws related to this world. Allah will not punish such

a child for that way of life – according to the strongest opinion – until he reaches the age of maturity and the proof is established against him. At that time, he must follow the religion of knowledge and reason, that is, the religion that he knows by his reasoning is the correct religion. If his parents are (in that case) rightly guided, he follows their religion, as Joseph did. Allah says, quoting him, "I followed the religion of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" [13:30]. Similarly, Jacob's children said to him, "We will serve your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac" [2:133].

But if the parents go against the way of the messengers, the person must still follow the way of the messengers. Allah says, "We have enjoined on man kindness to parents, but if they strive to force you to join with Me (in service) anything of which you have no knowledge, obey them not" [29:8]. If a person follows his parents blindly without ascertaining the truth, and in fact discards the truth that is evident to him, he is actually following his own desires and fancies. Allah has cautioned against this in these words, "When it is said to them, 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they say, 'No, we will follow the ways of our fathers.' What! Even though their fathers were devoid of wisdom and guidance!" [2:170]

That is actually the situation of many people who were born into Muslim families. They follow what their fathers were following with respect to beliefs and practices. If it is wrong, they are not aware of it (because they have not bothered to study the matter). He is Muslim by environment, not by choice. When he is asked in the grave, "Who is your Lord?" He will say, "Uh, uh, I don't know, I don't know. I heard the people saying something so I said the same."

The sensible person must ponder that situation. He must advise himself and stand up for Allah's sake. He must look to see which party he belongs to. And Allah is the only Guide. *Tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah* (the Lord's oneness) does not stand in need of (any additional) evidence; its truth is inherent in man. The closest thing a person can examine is his own life. First he was a drop of semen that proceeded from between the backbone and the ribs. It settle in a safe abode under three layers of darkness. It developed by itself, unaffected by anything the parents or anyone else might have done. Were it placed on a sheet or plate and all the doctors of the world gathered to produce a man out of it, they would not be able to do so.

It is impossible to conceive of your life in terms of nature. The elements of nature are dead and incapable of doing anything. They cannot be described as living. The dead cannot do any act or think about doing anything. If you think about how a drop of semen

passes from one state to another until it becomes a human being, you will be convinced that the Creator is one. From that, you can move one to *tawḥīd al-uluhīyyah* or that He is the only One worthy of worship. For when the mind realizes that he has a Lord Who created him, how could he possibly worship anything else? the more one thinks and ponders, the more he will be certain and firm concerning *tawḥīd*. And Allah is the Guide. There is no lord other than He, and no one worthy of worship except Him.

(50) Allah knows from eternity and knows in an instant the number of people who will go to Paradise and the number that will go to Hell. They will neither be increased or decreased (from what He knows). Similarly, He knows the acts which anyone will do.

Allah has said, "Verily, Allah knows everything" [8:75]; and "Allah is fully acquainted with all things" [33:40]. He has knowledge of everything from eternity to eternity. His knowledge is never preceded by ignorance of something. He said, "And your Lord never forgets (anything)" [19:64]. 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib narrated that once he attended a funeral with some people at Baqī al-Gharqad. The Prophet (peace be on him) came and sat down on the ground and the people sat around him. He had a stick in his hand and his eyes were fixed on the ground. He starting scratching the earth with the stick and said, "There is no breathing soul except that Allah has already written where it will go, Paradise or Hell, and whether it will be happy or miserable."

A man then said, "Messenger of Allah, should we not then rely on what has been written and abandon our deeds?" The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) answered him, "Those who are of the happy ones will do the deeds of the happy. Those who are of the miserable ones will do the deeds of the miserable." He then said, "Work, for everyone will find it easy to do that for which he has been created. The happy ones will have the opportunity to do the deeds of the happy, and the miserable ones will have the opportunity to do the deeds of the miserable." He then recited the verses, "So Whoever gives (in charity) and fears (Allah), and (in all sincerity) testifies to the good, We will make smooth for him the way to Bliss. But Whoever is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient and denies the good, We will indeed make smooth for him the way to

misery" [92:5-10]. This *ḥadīth* was recorded by both Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[216]

(51) Everyone is eased to what he was created for, and it is the action with which a man's life is sealed which dictates his fate. Those who are fortunate are fortunate by the decree of Allah. Likewise, those who are wretched are wretched by the decree of Allah.

The *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Alī which states, "Go on working, for everyone finds it easy to do that for which he was created," has just been mentioned. And Zuhayr recorded from Abū Az-Zubayr that Jābir Ibn 'Abdullah said: 'Suraqah Ibn Mālik Ibn Ju'shum came (to the Prophet) saying, "Messenger of Allah, explain to us our religion as if we were just now created. How are we going to work? Are we in a situation where everything has been predetermined and recorded, or are we to begin anew in the future?" He said, "No, verily, you are going to work in a situation where everything has been predetermined and recorded." He said, "Then why should we work?" Zuhayr (the subnarrator said), 'Then Abū Az-Zubayr said something that I did not understand. I asked him what he said and he answered (that the Prophet said), "Go on working, for everyone gets facilitated his opportunity (to do his deeds)."' [recorded by Muslim].[217]

Sahl Ibn Sa'īd As-Sā'adī narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "A man may do the deeds that will look to the people as if they are the deeds of Paradise but he is of the inhabitants of Hell. And a man may do the deeds that will look to the people as if they are the deeds of Hell and he is from the inhabitants of Paradise"[218] [recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim]. In Al-Bukhārī's recording, he has the additional words, "The deeds will be reckoned by the deeds performed when the person's life is sealed (i.e, at the time of his death)."[219]

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim also record a *ḥadīth* from 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him), the

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[216]Al-Bukhārī, 1362, 4945, 4946, 4947, etc.; Muslim, *Al-Qadr*, 2647; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4694; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Qadr*, 2136; Aḥmad, 1:82, 129, 132, 140; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 78; Ibn Ḥibban, 34, 35.

[217]Muslim, 2628; Aḥmad, 3:292, 293; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 1737; Ibn Ḥibban, 737.

[218]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī, 2898, 4202, 4207, 6493, 6607; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 112; Aḥmad, 5:332.

[219]Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Qadr*, 6493, 6607.

most honest of people, said, "In the wombs of your mother, your creation proceeds in this way: "You stay as a drop of sperm for forty days. It then turns into congealed blood for a similar amount of time. Then it becomes a lump (fetus) and stays as such for another similar amount of time. At that moment, an angel is sent who blows into it the soul. The angel is commanded to write four things about the being: its provision, age, deeds and whether it will be saved or doomed. By the One besides Whom there is no god, some of you do the work of the people of Paradise until you are only an arm's length from Paradise, then what has been ordained in the Book overtakes you, and you begin to do the work of the people of Hell and you enter into it. And some of you go on doing the deeds of the people of Hell until you are an arm's length from Hell, then what has been ordained in the Book overtakes you, and you begin to do the deeds of the people of Paradise and enter it."[220] *Aḥādīth* and statements of the Elders are many on this topic.

Abū 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-Barr wrote in *At-Tamhīd*, "The people who recorded these reports on this topic are many. Most of the theologians have discussed such *aḥādīth*. The Ahl as-Sunnah come together in faith and belief in these reports. They do not dispute them. And in Allah is protection and guidance."[221]

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[220]Al-Bukhārī, 3208, 3332, 6594, 7454; Muslim, *Al-Qadr*, 2643; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4708; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Qadr*, 2138; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 76; Aḥmad, 1:382, 414, 40; Al-Ḥumaydī, 126.

[221]Ibn 'Abdul-Barr, *At-Tamhīd* (Muṣṭafa Ibn Aḥmad Al-'Alwī & M. 'Abdul-Kabīr, eds.; Ribāt: Al-Maṭba'ah Al-Malakīyyah), 6:12.

(52) The exact nature of Allah's decree is Allah's secret in His creation. Neither any angel near the Throne nor any sent messenger has been given any knowledge of it. To delve into it or reflect too much about it only leads to destruction and loss, and results in rebelliousness. One should take every precaution concerning such investigation, thought, and allowing of doubts to appear. Verily, Allah has withheld the knowledge of *qadr* from His creatures and He has prohibited them from seeking it. Allah says in His Book, "He is not questioned for His acts, but they are questioned" [21:23]. Therefore, if one asks, why He did that, he has rejected the command of the Book, and whoever rejects the command of the Book becomes an infidel.

Fore-ordainment (*qadr*) is a secret that Allah has not disclosed to any of His creatures. He creates and destroys, makes poor and makes rich, gives death and gives life, misleads and guides. 'Alī said, "*Qadr* is Allah's secret, so do not try to uncover it."

The differences of opinion among the people concerning fore-ordainment is something well-known. What the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah believe is the following. Everything is according to Allah's ordainment and measure. Allah creates the actions of human beings. Allah says, "We have created all things according to a fore-ordained measure" [54:49]; and "He has created everything and formed it on a definite measure" [25:2]. Allah wills and decrees infidelity from the disbelievers. He is not pleased with it nor does He like it, but that is His Will with respect to creation (and allowing that thing), but He is not pleased with it as a way of life.

The free-willers (Qadarīyyah) and Mu'tazilah disagree with that. They claim that Allah wills faith on the part of the disbelievers but the disbelievers themselves have willed not to believe. They are forced to take that position just so they do not have to say, Allah wills disbelief from the disbelievers and then punishes them for it. They have become like one who jumps out of the frying pan into the fire; they fled from one thing and ended up in something much more evil. Their belief requires that the will of the disbeliever dominate the will of Allah because Allah had willed faith for them – according to their belief – and the disbeliever willed disbelief and the will of the disbeliever was fulfilled while Allah's was not. This is one of the worst articles of faith. It is a statement that has no evidence for it; in fact, it contradicts the evidence.

Al-Lalkā'ī recorded a *ḥadīth* of Baqīyyah from Al-Awza'ī who stated that Al-'Ala Ibn Al-Ḥajjaj narrated to them from Muḥammad

Ibn 'Ubayd Al-Makkī concerning Ibn 'Abbās, who was told that a man was coming who disbelieved in *qadr*. Ibn 'Abbās said, "Guide me to him," as Ibn 'Abbās was blind by that time. They asked him, "What will you do to him?" He said, "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if I could catch him I would bite his nose until I bit it off. Also, if I could catch hold of his neck, I would break it, for I have heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) say, 'I can see the women of Banū Fahm going around Al-Khazraj, moving their buttocks in an idolatrous march.' This (this man's belief) is the first idolatry (*shirk*) in Islam. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, this heresy of theirs will lead one to say that Allah does not ordain good in the same way they deny that He ordains evil."[222] Ibn 'Abbās' words, "This is the first idolatry in Islam....deny that He ordains evil," is consistent with his statement, "*Qadr* rounds out the belief in *tawḥīd*. Whoever believes Allah is one and then denies *qadr* has contradicted his *tawḥīd*."[223]

'Umar Ibn Al-Haytham said: "We went out on a vessel. With us was a Qadarī (free-willer) and a Magian. The Qadarī said to the Magian, 'Accept Islam.' the Magian said, 'When Allah wants it.' the Qadarī said, 'Allah wants it but Satan does not want it.' the Magian said, 'Allah wants something and Satan wants something and the result is what Satan wants; then Satan is stronger.'" In another narration, he said, "Then I am with the stronger of the two."

A Bedouin stopped at a meeting that included 'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd among them. The Bedouin said, "You people, my camel has been stolen, so ask Allah to return it to me." 'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd said, "O Allah, You did not will that the camel of this man be stolen, so I beg you to return it to the man." Then the Bedouin said, "I have no need of your supplication." He said, "Why not?" He answered, "Allah did not will it to be stolen and it was stolen. I am afraid that if He wills it to be returned it will not be returned."

A man asked Abū 'Iṣām Al-Qastalānī,[224] "If Allah forbids me guidance and leaves me astray and then He punishes me, will He be

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[222]Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah*, 4:625. One of the transmitters of the *ḥadīth*, Al-'Ala Ibn Al-Ḥajjaj, is weak and unreliable, hence the *ḥadīth* is weak.

[223]This narration is also weak, both as a statement of the Prophet (peace be on him) and as a statement of Ibn 'Abbās, as Al-Albānī pointed out in his footnotes to the commentary.

[224]Abū 'Isam Al-Qastalānī's history could not be traced. The words attributed to him here actually form part of a dialogue between the Mu'tazilī theologian, 'Abdul-Jabbār Al-Hamadānī (d. 415/1024) and the Ash'arī theologian, Abū Isḥāq Al-Isfara'inī. See Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 6:104.

doing justice?" Abū 'Iṣām said, "If guidance is something that He owns, He may give it to whom He likes and withhold it from whomever He wills."

As for proofs from the Qur'ān and Sunnah concerning fore-ordainment, they include the following:

"If We had so willed, We could certainly have brought every soul its true guidance. But the word from Me will come true. I will fill Hell with jinns and men all together" [32:13].

"If it had been your Lord's will, they would still have believed – all who are on the earth. Will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe?" [10:99].

"But you will not will except as Allah wills, the Cherisher of the Worlds" [81:29].

"But you will not will except as Allah wills, for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom" [76:30].

"Whom God wills, He leaves to wander; and whom He wills, He places on the Way that is correct" [6:39].

"Those whom Allah (in His plan) wills to guide, He opens their heart to Islam; those whom He wills to leave astray He makes their breast close and constricted as if he were engaged in sheer ascent in the sky" [6:125].

The cause of error is the equation of *mashī'ah* and *irādah* (determinative and executive will) with *riḍā* and *maḥabbah* (approving and loving will). Both the determinists (Jabarīyyah) and the free-willers (Qadarīyyah) make this equation. They are in agreement on this point but thereafter they differ. The determinists say that the entire world moves as it is ordained and willed by Allah; therefore, He approves of all of it and loves all of it. The free-willers, who deny fore-ordainment, say that since sin is not loved and approved by Allah, it is neither willed nor ordained by Him. It is outside of His determination (*mashī'ah*) and creation (*khalq*).

But the Qur'ān, Sunnah and sound human nature clearly distinguish between determinative will (*mashi'ah*) and loving will (*maḥabbah*).[225] As for the texts from the Qur'ān concerning deterministic and executive will, some of them have already been quoted. The texts concerning approving and loving will include Allah's statement, "Allah does not love mischief" [2:205]; "He does not approve of ingratitude from His servants" [39:7]. After prohibiting polytheism, wrongdoing, adultery and pride, Allah says,

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[225]For a discussion of this distinction, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 8:475-480, or Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, 1:253-254.

"The evil of such things is hateful in the sight of your Lord" [17:38].

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah dislikes you to engage in three things: useless conversation, too much questioning and wasting wealth."[226] In the *Musnad* (of Ahmad) there is a *ḥadīth* that says, "Allah loves you to act upon the concessions He has made, just as He dislikes you to do what He has forbidden."[227]

In his prayers, the Prophet (peace be on him) used to say, "O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and I seek refuge in your forgiveness from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You."[228] Consider how the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to seek refuge in the attribute of pleasure from the attribute of anger, and from the action of forgiveness from the action of punishment. The first is for an attribute and the second for the consequences of an attribute. Then he tied them all together with His essence. All of those return to Him, the One, and not to anyone else. He is in fact saying: What I seek refuge from happens by Your decree and will, and what I seek refuge in is Your pleasure and forgiveness, that also depend on Your decree and will. If You like to be kind to Your servant, You may forgive Him. If You will to be angry with him, You may punish him. Save me, therefore, from what I do not like and guard me against it. This will also be by Your will. Hence, the desirable and the undesirable both are by Your decree and will. Thus I seek refuge in You from You, in Your power, might and mercy, from what Your power, might, justice and wisdom will do. I am not seeking refuge in anyone else from anyone else, nor am I seeking refuge in You from anything caused by anyone else. It is all caused by You.

See what truths regarding Allah's unity and man's servitude are contained in these words. No one will know them except those who know Allah and know what it means to be His servant.[229]

One may ask: How is it that Allah decrees something yet He does not like it or approve of it? How can He will and create something and, at the same time, dislike and hate it? This question

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[226]Al-Bukhārī, 1477, 2408, 2975, 6473, 7292; Muslim, *Al-'Aqḍīyyah*, 1593; Aḥmad, 4:246, 249, 250, 251, 255.

[227]Aḥmad, 2:108; Ibn Ḥibban, 2742, 3568.

[228]Discussed earlier.

[229]For more on this point, see Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, 1:254-255, and *Shifā al-'Alīl* (Riyadh: Maktabat Ar-Riyāḍ Al-Ḥadithah, 1323 A.H.), pp. 272-273.

has divided the people into different sects and groups with each group's methodology and opinion being clearly divided.

Know that will is of two kinds: one which is willed because and for itself, and the other which is willed because and for something else. The thing that is willed for itself is sought and loved for itself and for what it brings about of good. It is willed as a type of will for it as a goal and end. As for the thing which is willed because and for something else, it itself is not the goal of what is willed; it has no real benefit to it from itself, but is a means to the actual goal and will. Therefore, it is disliked by the willer from the point of view of its existence in itself; but what it leads to is the thing that is actually willed. Therefore, two aspects are combined in one: dislike for it and willing it to be. There is no contradiction or conflict here, since they are related to other things. It is similar to medicine which is disliked though the one who takes it knows that it contains his cure. Another example is the amputation of a diseased organ which is necessary to save the life of a patient; or a person who undertakes an arduous journey because he will reach a desired and liked goal. People often do things that they do not like in the hope that they will produce desired results, even if the results are only probable and they cannot be certain about them.

But what about the One Who has nothing hidden from Him? Allah may dislike something, but this does not counter His willing that thing for another purpose as it will be a cause for something that is beloved to Him. For example, Allah created Iblīs. He is the being of wickedness in ways of life, actions, beliefs and volitions. He is the cause of many human beings' unhappiness and for their actions that are displeasing to Allah. He is the deliverer of the acts that are in opposition to what Allah loves and is pleased with. At that same time, though, he is a means for many things that Allah will love to bestow on His creatures. Therefore, his existence is more beloved to Allah than his non-existence. This is true for many reasons, including (the following):

(By creating Iblīs) Allah demonstrates to His servants His ability to create opposites and contraries. He has created a being who is the most wicked and the cause of every wickedness. Yet, at the same time, He created his opposite, the angel Gabriel. Gabriel is one of the most noble of all creatures and a source of every good. Blessed be the Creator of the latter and the former. Similarly, this power of Allah's is demonstrated in His creation of night and day, disease and cure, life and death, right and wrong, good and evil. This is part of the detailed evidence of His perfect power, absolute authority, dominion and rule, for He has created those opposites. They are set up against one another. He has used them for meeting His goals. If

the world were devoid of these opposites, we would not have witnessed the faultless wisdom, the absolute power and the perfect rule He has over all things.

Second, Iblīs enables the manifestation of such names (and attributes) of Allah as the Dominant, the Avenger, the Just, the One Who chastises, Who is strict in punishment, Who is quick to judge, Whose grip is strong, Who brings low, and Who humiliates. These names and actions are all part of perfection. Their objects, therefore, have to exist. If the jinns and humans were similar in nature to the angels, none of these names would have become manifest.

Third, Iblīs makes possible the manifestation of such names of Allah as show that He forbears, forgives, overlooks and forgoes the violations of His rights, and sets sinners free. If He had not created things which He detests but which makes possible the manifestation of these names, these benefits and wisdom would have been lost. The Prophet (peace be upon him) referred to this point when he said, "If you do not sin, Allah will remove you and put in your place a people who will sin and then ask Him to forgive them, that He may forgive them."[230]

Fourth, Iblīs makes possible the manifestation of the wisdom and knowledge of the One Who is wise and knowing, Who places things in their proper places, and nothing in the wrong place, as is dictated by His wisdom and knowledge. He knows to whom He should give His message. He knows who are fit for it and who will receive it gratefully and who are not fit for it. If undesirable causes were removed because they produced evil consequences, the good things that outweigh these evils would have never been realized. Look at the sun, the moon and the wind. They produce good as well as evil but their good greatly outweighs their evil.

Fifth, if Iblīs had not been created, a number of things by which men affirm their servitude to Allah would not have occurred. The act of worship in *jihād* is one of the most beloved acts of worship to Allah. If all people were Believers, that act of worship would be nullified as well as its consequences of having loyalty and enmity for the sake of Allah. Similarly, the worship in the acts of commanding good and eradicating evil, in having patience, in going against one's desires, in sacrificing out of love for Allah, in repentance and asking forgiveness, in seeking refuge in Allah from being overtaken by his enemy, and being protected from the evil one's plots, and so on, are all part of the wisdom that the human

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[230]Muslim, *At-Tawbah*, 2749; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 2526; Aḥmad, 2:305, 309. See also Muslim, 2748; At-Tirmidhī, 3539; Aḥmad, 5:414.

mind would not have been able to discover (if it had not been for the creation of Iblīs).

Someone might ask if it would be possible to achieve those good things without that cause. This question itself is invalid. It supposes that one can have an outcome without a cause, a consequence without having an antecedent. It is like hypothesizing a son without a father, movement without a moving object, repentance without one to repent, and so on.

One may ask if those things that one must have in order to produce these good things are desirable for that reason or are undesirable and evil in every respect. This question is responded to in two ways. First, from the point of view of Allah, should Allah love these acts because they are conducive to other things He holds dear, even though He dislikes them in themselves? And, second, from the point of view of the human being, is it permissible for him to be pleased with those things on that account? These are basically two different questions.

The first thing to note is that evil is always traced to non-existence, that is, the non-existence of good. The factors that lead to evil are evil on this account. But as for their simply existing, they have nothing evil in them. For example, evil souls as existing beings are good but they become evil by losing any goodness in them. They have been created as moving beings. When they are given knowledge or inspiration for the good, they move to the good. But when they are not given it, they move by themselves in the opposite direction. Movement, from the standpoint of being simply movement, is good. It can become evil in a relative sense or in relation to something else but not simply from the point of view that it is movement. All evil is wrongdoing, which means placing a thing in a wrong place. If it were put in its proper place, it will not be evil. This means that its evil character is something relative.

This is why punishments that are properly meted out are good in and of themselves, although they are evil with respect to the person being punished due to the pain that it inflicts that goes against the natural disposition for pleasure. That is, pain is evil with respect to him. But the act is good with respect to the one inflicted upon when it is meted out properly. Allah never created anything one hundred percent evil without any good aspects to it. His wisdom prevented that. It is inconceivable for Allah to desire something that is evil in all its aspects that has no benefit whatsoever in its creation. All good is in His hands and no evil proceeds from Him. In fact, everything that comes from Him is good. Evil occurs because of its lack of being related or attributed to Him. If it had proceeded from Him, it

would not have been evil. Thus the severance of this relation with Allah makes a thing evil.

One may argue that all relations have not been severed; evil is still something that has been fore-ordained and created. This is true, but in this respect the thing is not evil. Certainly its existence is attributed to Allah, but from that point of view it is not evil. It is evil because He has not made it good or conducive to anything good. This deprivation of goodness is not a "thing" that one may ascribe to Allah, Who has every good in His hands.

If further explanation is desired, note that the causes of good are three: creation, preparation (*i'dād*) and promotion (*imdād*). To create something is good, and that is for Allah only. Similarly, preparing something (for something else) and promoting it is also good. When there is no preparation or promotion, evil comes about. Their absence is not something attributed to Allah; He just does the opposite.

If one asks why Allah did not promote and strengthen the thing (with goodness) when He created it, the response is that His wisdom did not require it. It required only its creation. Its creation is good; evil enters into it because it has not been promoted and strengthened. One may then ask: Why is it that Allah did not promote everything He created? This question is invalid. It assumes that the wise course is to put all existing things on the same level. This is wrong. On the contrary, wisdom requires disparity between things, as is apparent in this world. Disparity, it should be clear, does not arise from the creation of different varieties of things; rather, it arises from the absence of certain things that are not the object of creation. As for creation itself, there is not disparity in it.[231] If you still cannot understand this point, then act upon the words of the poet:[232]

"If you cannot do a thing,
Leave it, and do what you can."

One may ask: How is it that Allah likes His servants to do something but does not help them do it? the reply is that His help may sometimes cause the loss of something more dear to Him than that particular act He likes His servant to do; or that act may produce some evil that He dislikes more than He likes that act to be performed. Allah points to that in His saying, "If they had intended to come out, they would certainly have made some preparation

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[231]For a discussion of this point, see Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, 2:200ff.

[232]This is a line from an ode by the poet and warrior, Ma'dikarab Az-Zubaydī, famous for his chivalry before his Islam as well as after it.

thereof. But Allah was averse to their being sent forth. So He made them lag behind" [9:46]. Allah states that He disliked their going off to *jihād* with the Prophet (peace be on him), which is an act of obedience. And when He disliked that act from them He made them lag behind. Then Allah mentions some of the evils that would have resulted had they gone with the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him). Allah says, "If they had gone forth with you, they would not have added to your strength, but only made for disorder, and gone to and fro in your midst sowing sedition among you. And there are some among you who would have listened to them" [9:47]. Thus the evil that would have resulted was greater than the potential good from their going forth. Hence, His wisdom and mercy required that He make them lag behind. This example can be used as a basis upon which other cases may be judged.

Now comes the second aspect, that concerning human beings. These possibilities are not only conceivable in his case but also realities. Human beings hate evil and sinful acts committed by men, chosen, willed and executed by them. On the other hand, human beings accept them, resign themselves to them, as they happen according to how Allah has known them, written, willed and created them. We are pleased with whatever is from Allah but dislike what is from men. This is the path of those with real knowledge. Other people denounce evil without any qualification. However, their view does not differ from the view of the former group since, when they condemn evil without any qualification, they do not have Allah's will and pre-determination in mind.

The essence of the matter is that the part of evil which comes from Allah is not undesirable, but what comes from man is undesirable. If anyone says that nothing comes from man, the response is that this is the fallacious determinism from which few people have been rescued. It has been comparatively easier to save the Free-Willers from their quagmire. The way of the Ahl as-Sunnah, which is between that of the Free-Willers and determinists, is the one that happily escapes the predicament of the other two groups.

One may ask: How is it possible for one to repent when one knows that actions have been fore-ordained, willed and created by Allah, and they occur for their own reasons? This poses a problem only for those who cannot see things in their proper perspective. He is the one who considers evil a virtue since it involves compliance with the determinative will of Allah and who thinks that even though

he has disobeyed Allah's command, he has obeyed His will. A poet[233] has said concerning this matter:

"I am to repent for what He chooses for me;
Is not all that I do in compliance with His will?"

Such people are of the most blind and most ignorant of Allah and His commands and creative will. They are unaware that obedience is compliance with the religious command of Allah and to His prescriptive will, and not concurrence with His fore-ordainment or creative Will. If concurrence with the creative will of Allah were an act of obedience to Him, Iblīs would have been the most obedient of Allah, as well as the people of Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot and Shu'ayb, and even the followers of Pharaoh would have been the most obedient servants.[234] This is truly ignorance.

However, when one realizes his inability and finds that things occur according to the will of Allah, that one depends upon Him absolutely and that one needs His protection all the time; then one is working for Allah and not for himself. Under those circumstances, he will never commit a sin. He will be under the protection of the One Who has said of such a man, "He hears by Me, sees by Me, strikes by Me, and walks by Me."[235] One cannot imagine that a man in such a state could disobey Allah. When this state passes away and he is aware of himself only, his desires overcome him and he falls pray to various enemies. But as the mist of natural existence vanishes, he feels ashamed for his acts, repents and returns to Allah. For, in the state of sin, his carnal self had the upper hand and he had forgotten the Lord. Naturally, when that state passes away, he enters into a different state, into an existence for his Lord and not for himself.[236]

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[233]This line has been attributed to the famous poet, Muḥammad Ibn Sawār Ibn Isrā'īl Ibn Al-Khidr Ash-Shaybānī (d. 677/1278). See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 8:257; About the poet's life, see Adh-Dhahabī, *Al-'Ibar fī Khabar man Ghabar* (Kuwait: Dār Al-Matbū'at wa An-Nashr, 1383/1963), 5:316.

[234]See the discussion on this point by Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 8:257.

[235]The *ḥadīth* expressing this meaning is the one which Al-Bukhārī recorded (6502): the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah the Almighty has said, 'Whosoever shows enmity to a friend of Mine, I will be at war with him. My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the duties I have imposed on him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory deeds until I love him. When I love him, I become his ears with which he hears, his eyes with which he sees, his hands with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask (something) of Me, I would surely give it to him. And were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant that to him.'"

[236]For a discussion of this point, see Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, 2:193-204.

Again, one might argue, since disbelief is ordained and determined by Allah, and we are commanded to be pleased with whatever Allah ordains, how can we reject and dislike it? First, we are not commanded to be pleased with everything Allah has ordained or commanded. There is no evidence for that in the Qur'ān or Sunnah. There are things ordained that are to be accepted and there are things ordained that are to be detested and denounced, just as Allah does not approve of some of things that He ordains. In fact, some of the things that He ordains He actually detests. Similarly, we are to hate, detest and condemn certain things.

Second, there are two aspects involved here. The first is the decree of Allah, which is an act associated with the essence of Allah. The second is the object that has been decreed, and this is something other than and separate from Allah. As far as the decree itself is concerned, it is always good, wise and just. We accept and are pleased with all of it. The object that is decreed is also of two kinds, one which we should accept and welcome, and the other, which we should not accept or be pleased with.

Third, the decree itself also has two aspects to it. The first is its connection and attribution to Allah. From this point of view, one must be pleased with it. The second aspect has to do with its relation and connection to the human being. From this point of view, it may be either something to be pleased with or something not to be pleased with. Consider the case, for example, of murder. One aspect of it is that it has been ordained by Allah, written and willed by Him, and made the end of the life of that man. As such, we accept it and resign ourselves to it. The second aspect is that it has been committed by a killer who decided to kill the man, carried out the killing, and violated the command of Allah. As such, we denounce it and are not pleased with it.

The author stated, "*Ta'ammuq* into the problem of fore-ordainment (*qadr*) is to court the displeasure of Allah." *Ta'ammuq* means to exaggerate in search of something, that is, to exaggerate in trying to discover the secrets of *qadr* and to engage deeply in discussion of it may lead to the displeasure of Allah and the loss of His favors. Hence, one should avoid delving into it and entering into controversies.

He then stated, "One should take every precaution concerning such investigation, thought and allowing of doubts to appear."

Abū Hurayrah reported that some of the Companions came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) and told him, "We sometimes get ideas that are too obnoxious to mention." the Prophet (peace be on him), "Do you really get them?" They said, "Yes." He then said, "That is a clear sign of faith." Muslim recorded this

ḥadīth.[237] the words, "a clear sign of faith" refer to the feeling which the Companions had regarding their ideas, the feeling that they disliked them and did not want to state them.

Muslim also recorded from 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) was asked about the whisperings of Satan. He said, "They are the unmistakable proofs of faith."[238] This *ḥadīth* implies the same meaning as the above *ḥadīth* from Abū Hurayrah. When one experiences evil whisperings and insinuations and tries to suppress them, one is fighting with Satan, and that is certainly a sign of faith.

This was the way of the Companions and their righteous Successors. After them came people who voiced their ideas and ventilated their doubts and filled tomes. Not only did they blacken pages but they blackened hearts. They set their false ideas against the truth and tried to suppress the truth. This is the reason the author has so strongly condemned the discussion of *qadr*. 'Ā'ishah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "The person most hateful to Allah is the one who engages in controversy and violent disputation."[239] Aḥmad recorded a *ḥadīth* saying that Abū Mu'āwīyah narrated to us, saying that Dāwūd Ibn Abī Hind narrated to us, on the authority of 'Amr Ibn Shu'ayb from his father, on the authority of his grandfather, who said, "One day the Prophet (peace be on him) passed by a group of people who were discussing fore-ordainment (*qadr*). His face turned red with anger as if a pomegranate had exploded. He said, 'What has happened to you that you are setting one verse of Allah's book against another! Those who engaged in such things before you were destroyed.'" the narrator stated that never before did he so much hate to be with a group as the one the Prophet (peace be on him) addressed that day. Ibn Mājah also recorded it.[240]

Allah has said, "They had their enjoyment of their portion (*bi-khalāqihim*), and you have of yours, as did those before you; and you indulge in idle talk as they did" [9:69]. The word *khalāq* means 'portion', as Allah says, "And they will have no portion in the

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[237]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 132; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 5111; Aḥmad, 2:397, 441, 456; Ibn Ḥibban, 145, 146, 148.

[238]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 133; Ibn Ḥibban, 149; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 59; Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *Mushkil al-Āthār* (Hyderabad, 1331; reprint- Beirut: Dār Ṣādir), 2:251.

[239]Discussed earlier. It was recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

[240]Ibn Mājah, 85; Aḥmad, 2:178, 181, 185, 195; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah*, 1118, 1119; 'Abdur-Razzāq, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 20367. According to Al-Albānī it is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

Hereafter" [2:200]. That is, you enjoyed your portion in this world as the people before you enjoyed their portion; and you engage in idle talk in the same fashion they did.

Allah has thus associated enjoyment of one's portion with indulgence in idle talk. This is because corruption in religion occurs either in action or in belief. The former is caused by evil desires, and the latter is caused by doubt. Al-Bukhārī recorded from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "My community will follow in the footsteps of earlier communities, step by step, and do everything they did, small or big." the people asked, "Do you mean the Persians and the Romans?" He said, "Are there people other than these?"[241] 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "My people will follow in the footsteps of the children of Israel. If they had intercourse with their mothers openly, some of my people would also do that. If they divided into seventy-two sects, my people will divide into seventy-three sects, all of which will go to Hell except one sect." They asked, "Who is (that one) group, Messenger of Allah?" He answered, "The sect that follows the way I and my Companions are treading" [recorded by At-Tirmidhi].[242]

Abū Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "The Jews divided into seventy-one or seventy-two groups and the Christians did so also. My people will be divided into seventy-three groups." Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and also by At-Tirmidhī, who said it is *hasan ṣaḥīḥ*.[243]

Mu'āwīyah Ibn Abī Sufyān narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "The People of the Two Books divided their religion into seventy-two schisms. This nation will divide into seventy-three schisms – following desires – all of them in the Hell-fire except one, and that is the *jamā'ah* ('community')."[244]

The most controversial issue, and the issue that caused the most differences of opinion, is that of *qadr*. Discussion on this topic has reached its extreme limit.

The author stated, "If someone asks, "Why did He do that?" he has rejected the command of the Book. And whoever rejects the

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[241] Al-Bukhārī, 7319, also 3456, 7320; Muslim, 2669; Ibn Mājah, 3994; Aḥmad, 2:450; Ibn Ḥibban, 6668.

[242] At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2641. It is *ḥasan*.

[243] Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4596; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2642; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 3991; Ibn Ḥibban, 2614; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:128. It is *ḥasan*.

[244] Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4597; Ad-Dārimī, *Sunan*, 2:241; Aḥmad, 4:102; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah*, 150. It is *ḥasan*.

command of the Book becomes an infidel." This statement is true because the edifice of servitude to Allah and faith in Allah, His books and His messengers rests upon complete submission to Him without questioning the wisdom of His laws, His commands and His prohibitions. Allah has nowhere mentioned a community that believed in its prophet and in his message and then demanded reasons for the laws he enacted or the things he enjoined upon them or prohibited them. If they had done that, they would not have been true Believers in His prophet. On the contrary, whatever community He has mentioned had submitted to its prophet and believed in whatever he said. If it knew the reasons for His commands that was so much the better; but if it could not know them, it never deferred its compliance with the commands until it knew the reasoning behind them; it did not concern itself with that matter. The place of its prophet was greater and more respected in its sight (so it did not have to) ask him such questions. It is recorded in the Gospel (that Jesus said), "Children of Israel, ask not why God has commanded, but ask what He has commanded." That was the custom of the Elders of this community, those who were most knowledgeable and intelligent. They never asked the Prophet, "Why did Allah command this? Why did He forbid this? Why did He decree this? Why did He do that?" They knew that that was the antithesis of their faith and submission. The structure of Islamic life is built on unqualified surrender and submission.

The first step on this road is to testify that what the Prophet (peace be on him) commands is true, then to resolve firmly to obey it, then to begin doing it without delay, and remove the obstacles along the road, then to exert oneself fully and perform it in the best possible way, and finally, to do it just for the sake of obeying the command, not hesitating to fulfill it until you know the wisdom behind it such that you do the act only if you know the wisdom behind it and otherwise you do not do it. This behavior negates submission and blemishes obedience.

Al-Qurṭubī quoted Ibn 'Abdul-Barr who said, "If anyone asks for reasons in order to increase his knowledge, remove his ignorance or gain insight into the religion, there is no harm in that; the cure for ignorance is in asking. But whoever asks in a spirit of defiance and not for the sake of learning or gaining insight, that is forbidden, no matter how little or much he should ask."

Ibn Al-'Arabī said, "The scholar must gather together all the bits of evidence, look into various approaches, gather the information necessary for reaching a judgment, and formulate the argument properly. If a problem arises and it is attacked in the correct way, Allah opens the door to the correct answer."

The Prophet said, "Of the best Islamic behavior is a man avoiding the things that do not concern him" [recorded by At-Tirmidhī and others].[245]

There is no doubt that whoever rejects a command of the Book must be considered a disbeliever. But those who interpret any command of the Book due to some conception that they have must have the correct approach explained to them so they will be able to follow it. Allah is not questioned about His actions simply because He has absolute powers and authority, as Jahm and his followers believe, but because His actions have good reasons for them and are required by His mercy and justice.

We will return to this point later when commenting upon the author's words, "We do not call anyone an infidel for committing a sin unless he makes that act lawful."[246]

(53) This is all that people with enlightened hearts need to know, people who are devoted servants of Allah, and constitutes the degree of those firmly grounded in knowledge. Verily, knowledge is of two types: one existent (or accessible) in creation and one inaccessible in creation. To deny the knowledge that is existent is infidelity; to claim the knowledge that is inaccessible is also infidelity. Faith is not confirmed until a person accepts the knowledge that is existent and abandons seeking the knowledge which is inaccessible.

The word "this" in the author's words above refers to what the author discussed earlier, that is, the truths which the Shari'ah has expounded and which should be believed and practiced. In his statement, "and constitutes the degree of those firmly grounded in knowledge," knowledge means knowledge of what the Prophet (peace be on him) taught, the general principles as well as the details, the affirmations as well as the negations. What is meant by "non-accessible knowledge" is the knowledge concerning fore-ordainment that Allah has withheld from His creatures. And what is meant by the "existent (or accessible) knowledge" is the knowledge of the Shari'ah, the principles of faith as well as the rules of practice. Whoever rejects anything the Messenger presented is one of the disbelievers. Whoever claims to possess knowledge of the

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[245]At-Tirmidhī, *Az-Zuhd*, 2318; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 3976; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 4132.

[246]See Section 67 of the author's text.

Unseen is one of the disbelievers. Allah has stated, "He knows the Unseen, and does not acquaint anyone with His mysteries (*ghaybihi*) except a messenger whom He chooses" [72:26-27]; and, "Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). It is He Who sends down rain, and He Who knows what is in the wombs. No one knows what it is that he will earn on the morrow; nor does anyone know in what land he is to die. Verily with Allah is full knowledge, and He is acquainted with all things" [31:34].

If the wisdom of Allah is hidden from us and is not known to us, that does not mean that no purpose or reason underlies the creation or action. Do you not see that the wisdom behind Allah's creation of snakes, scorpions, mice and insects is unknown to us? All we know about these things is that they are harmful. But this does not mean that Allah did not create them or that there is no purpose in Allah's creating them, for ignorance of a matter is not proof of its non-existence.

(54) We believe in the Pen, the Tablet and all that is written on it.

Allah has said, "Nay, this is a glorious Qur'ān (inscribed) in a Preserved Tablet" [85:21-22]. Abū Al-Qāsim Aṭ-Ṭabarānī recorded a *ḥadīth* narrated by his chain of transmitters back to the Prophet (peace be on him), who said, "Allah created a Preserved Tablet out of white pearls with pages made of red rubies. Its pen is of light. Its writing is of light. Allah turns to it three hundred sixty times a day. (Its width is as much as the distance between the sky and the earth.) He creates and sustains, causes life and death, honors people and vilifies people, and does what He wills."[247]

This is the Preserved Tablet, wherein Allah wrote the measures of created beings. And this is the Pen that Allah created and wrote with in the Preserved Tablet. In *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* it is recorded from 'Ubādah Ibn Aṣ-Ṣāmit that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "The first thing that Allah created was the Pen. He said to it, 'Write.' It said, 'O Lord, what shall I write?' He

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[247]At-Ṭabarānī recorded this *ḥadīth* in *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, 12511. Two of its transmitters, Zayad Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Buka'ī and Al-Layth Ibn Abī Sālim, are weak. Hence the *ḥadīth* is weak. Aṭ-Ṭabarānī also recorded this *ḥadīth* through a different chain (hadīth no. 10605) but, according to that narration, it is a saying of the companion Ibn 'Abbās. (See Al-Haythamī, *Majmū' az-Zawā'id*, 7:191.)

answered, 'Write the measure of everything until the Hour (of Judgment) occurs.'"[248]

Scholars differ as to whether the Pen or the Throne was the first of the created things. There are two opinions, as noted by Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Al-'Alā Al-Hamadhānī. The stronger opinion is that the Throne was created before the Pen, based on what is confirmed in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr, who narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Allah created the measures of all things fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth while His Throne was on the waters."[249] This *ḥadīth* shows that the measures were fixed after the creation of the Throne.

As for the *ḥadīth* of 'Ubādah, the statement, "The first thing Allah created was the Pen..." is either one or two sentences. If it is only one – which is the correct view – its meaning is, "When He first created the Pen, He said, 'Write.'" This is stated in one narration, "When Allah first created the Pen He said, 'Write.'" If it is two sentences, where both "First" and "the Pen" are in the nominative case, it must be understood to mean that it was the first thing created of this creation. In this case, the two *aḥādīth* will be in agreement, as the *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr states clearly that the Throne preceded the measurements – an event that coincided with the creation of the Pen. In another version of the *ḥadīth*, the words are, "When Allah created the Pen, He said to it, 'Write.'"

The Pen referred to in these *ḥadīth* is the first, best and most glorious Pen. Many commentators on the Qur'ān are of the opinion that it is the Pen by which Allah swears in the verse, "*Nūn*. By the Pen, and by what they write" [68:1-2].[250] the second pen is the pen with which the revelations that are sent to prophets and messengers are written. Those who write with this pen are the governors of this world. All pens are in the service of their pens. During the Ascension (*isra'*), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) heard the movement of these pens,[251] which record the things that Allah reveals He will do concerning this world above and the lower world.

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[248]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4700; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Qadr*, 2155, *At-Tafsīr*, 2319; Aḥmad, 5:317. This *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ* according to Al-Albānī and Al-Arnawūṭ.

[249]This *ḥadīth* was discussed earlier. It is recorded by Aḥmad and others and is authentic.

[250]See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 4:401.

[251]Al-Bukhārī, 349, 1636, 3342; Muslim, 163.

(55) If all creation gathered together to prevent something that Allah has decreed will occur, they would not be able to prevent it. And if they all gathered together to have something done that Allah has decreed will not occur, they would not be able to do it. The Pen has finished writing whatever will occur until the Last Day.

Earlier was presented the *ḥadīth* of Jābir from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in which Surāqah Ibn Mālik Ibn Ju'shum said, "Messenger of Allah, teach our religion to us as if we were just now created. What are we going to do? Are we going to do what the pens have already written and what has been ordained, or will we be doing something new?" the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "No, you will be doing what the Pens have written and what has already been ordained."[252]

Ibn 'Abbās stated that one day he was riding behind the Prophet when he turned to him and said, "Son, I want to teach you some words. Remember Allah and He will remember you. Remember Him and you will find Him with you. Ask of Him whenever you want to ask, and pray for His help whenever you need help. Know that if the whole world combines to do you any good, they will not be able to do it unless Allah has decreed it for you. And if they all combine to cause you harm, they will not be able to do anything except what Allah has ordained for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried" [recorded by At-Tirmidhī, who called it *hasan ṣaḥīḥ*.][253]

In recordings of this *ḥadīth* other than that of At-Tirmidhī, it states, "Remember Allah and you will find Him in front of you. Know Allah during times of ease and He will know you during times of hardship. Know that what missed you was not to come to you, and what afflicted you was not to miss you. Know that help comes with patience. Know also that relief comes with suffering. And know that along with hardship comes ease."[254]

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[252]Recorded by Muslim, discussed earlier.

[253]At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣiffat al-Qiyāmah*, 2516; also see Aḥmad, 1:293, 303, 307. It is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[254]An-Nawawī has mentioned this wording in his *Arba'īn* (text with English translation by Ezzeddīn Ibrāhīm and Denys Johnson-Davies, Damascus: The Holy Qur'ān Publishing House, 1976, pp. 69-71). Ibn Rajab said this *ḥadīth* was recorded by 'Abd Ibn Ḥumayd in his *Musnad* with a weak chain. (*Jami' 'Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam*, p. 174). Aḥmad also recorded a longer version of this *ḥadīth* (*Musnad*, 1:307) with three

The word pen in the above *aḥādīth* has been used in the plural. This shows that there are pens to write the measures of things that are different from the first Pen mentioned earlier along with the Preserved Tablet. In fact, the *aḥādīth* show that there are four types of pens and these are different from what was described earlier. The first Pen is for writing the measures of all created things. This is the Pen that was mentioned in connection with the Preserved Tablet. The second pen was created with Adam. This pen is for recording the measures of mankind. The Qur'ān refers to it when it states that Allah wrote the acts of human beings, their provisions, ages and destinies right after He had created their father Adam. The third pen is referred to in many authentic *aḥādīth* which state that after conception an angel is sent to the fetus in the womb of the mother to blow the soul into it. He is then asked to record its provisions, lifespan, deeds and whether it will be saved or doomed. The fourth pen is referred to in verses and *aḥādīth* that state that when a person reaches the age of maturity, two honorable angels are appointed to record his actions.[255]

Once it is known that everything proceeds from Allah, it is a necessary conclusion that one must fear and revere only Him. Allah says, "Therefore, fear not men, but fear Me" [5:47]; "Fear Me and Me alone" [2:41]; "It is such as obey Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah and do right that will win in the end" [24:52]; and, "He is the Lord of Righteousness (*taqwā*) and the Lord of Forgiveness" [75:56]. There are many other similar verses in the Qur'ān. It is plain that everyone fears something, since he does not live alone. Even a king whose commands are not disobeyed has to ward off things that may harm his people. Therefore, everyone has to fear and be wary of something. If he does not have fear of the Creator, he has fear of the created. Since the likes and dislikes of people differ, one may like what another hates. He will not be able to satisfy everyone. Ash-Shāfi'ī said, "You cannot succeed in pleasing everybody." Hence, the proper course is to do what is right and avoid all evils. Do not, though, try to please people. This is not

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chains, but only of them is unbroken, the third being unbroken and authentic.

[255]In the Qur'ān it states, "But verily over you (are appointed angels) to protect you, kind and honorable, writing down (your deeds). They know all that you do" [82:10-12]. There is a *ḥadīth* reported by 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib and 'Ā'ishah that states, "The Pen will not write the deeds of three persons: children until they reach the age of maturity, people asleep until they awake, and the insane until they regain sanity." [See Aḥmad, 1:116, 118, 140, 158 and 6:100, 101, 144].

possible nor are you required to do it. But pleasing Allah is both possible and required.

Furthermore, the created cannot be independent of Allah. If a person fears his Lord, he will not have to look to people for assistance. 'Ā'ishah wrote to Mu'āwīyah - some have narrated this as a statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and others as a statement of 'Ā'ishah – "Whoever displeases people to please Allah, Allah will be pleased with him and endear him to people; and whoever pleases the people by displeasing Allah, those who praised him first will end up abusing him."[256] Hence, if a person pleases Allah, He will relieve him from needing people's help and love and eventually He will cause them to be pleased with him. Truly, ultimate happiness is for those who fear Allah and act righteously. Allah will love him and the people will love him, as is confirmed in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s from the Prophet, who said, "When Allah loves someone He calls Gabriel and says, 'ī love so-and-so and you, too, must love him.' Thereafter Gabriel loves him and announces in the heavens, 'Allah loves so-and-so, so all of you love him, too.' Then the inhabitants of the heavens love him. Finally, he is loved by all on earth."[257] the Prophet (peace be upon him) also said the opposite about those whom Allah dislikes.

It is clear that no one is free of fear; one fears either the Creator or some of the created. However, when one fears the created, one loses more than one gains, for obvious reasons. But the fear of Allah is what secures happiness in both this world and the next. He is the Lord of Righteousness (*taqwā*) and the Lord of Forgiveness. He is the One Who forgives sins. None of the creations can forgive sins and none of them can save anyone from His punishment. He alone can offer protection and there is no protection in anyone other than Him. Some of the Elders will say, "The God-fearing person is never in need because Allah has said, 'For those who fear Allah, He prepares a way out and provides for them from sources they could never imagine [65:2-3]." He has thus guaranteed a way out which no one else can guarantee. Furthermore, He will determine a provision for them they that will not have conceived. If this does not occur, it means there is some shortcoming in the person's piety and

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[256]At-Tirmidhī, *Az-Zuhd*, 2414; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 4213; Ibn Ḥibban, 276, 277; Al-Ḥumaydī, *Musnad*, 266; Al-Quda'ī, *Musnad ash-Shahab*, 499, 500, 501. According to Al-Albānī, the *ḥadīth* is authentic both as a statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and as a statement of 'Ā'ishah.

[257]Al-Bukhārī, 3209, 6040, 7485; Muslim, *Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, 2637; At-Tirmidhī, *At-Tafsīr*, 3160; *Al-Muwaṭṭa*, 2:953; Aḥmad, 2:267, 341, 413, 509, 514.

God-consciousness. He must seek Allah's forgiveness and repent to him. Then Allah says in the verse, "If anyone puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is Allah for him" [65:3]. Allah will take care of him and he will never be in need of anyone else.

Some people think that trust repudiates earning one's livelihood or seeking necessary means. If the thing has already been determined, there is no need to look for means and sources. This belief is wrong. The means to earning a livelihood are sometimes obligatory, sometimes praiseworthy, sometimes permissible, sometimes undesirable and sometimes forbidden, as has been explained in the relevant works. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was the best of anyone when it came to relying upon Allah. But he used to wear wargear for the battle. He also used to walk in the marketplaces to earn a livelihood, to the extent that the disbelievers said, "What sort of a messenger is this who eats food and walks through the marketplaces?" [25:7]. Many of those who believe that earning and seeking means of livelihood are incompatible with trusting in Allah actually live off what other people give them, either of charity or gifts, including the gifts of tax collectors, police officers and the like. This is discussed in the relevant works. This is not the place to discuss that in detail. In particular, one may look at the commentary on the verse, "Allah blots out or confirms what He pleases, with Him is the Mother of the Book" [13:39].

Concerning the verse, "Every day He is engaged in some work" [55:29], Al-Baghawī quoted Muqātil's observation that this verse was revealed to counter the Jewish belief that Allah does not do anything on the Sabbath.[258] the commentators state that among the things He is engaged in are giving life and death, sustaining, honoring a people, humiliating another people, healing the sick, freeing captives, relieving the problems of the distressed, responding to supplications, giving to one who asks, forgiving sins, and numerous other deeds that cannot all be mentioned here, that He does for His creation whenever He wills.[259]

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[258]Ibn Al-Jawzī, *Ẓād al-Maṣīr*, 8:114; Al-Baghawī, *Ma'ālim at-Tanzil*, printed on the margin of *Tafsīr al-Khāzin* (Beirut: Dār Al-Fikr), 4:270.
[259]See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 4:273.

(56) What has missed someone was not to befall him, and what has befallen him was not to miss him.

This follows from what was stated earlier, that whatever Allah has decreed must come to pass. A poet expressed this point beautifully when he said:

> "What Allah has ordained will certainly happen.
> Ignorant and wretched are those who blame their lot."

Another poet said:

> "Be content, young man, with what is given you,
> for Allah does not forget even an ant.
> If things turn in your favor welcome them,
> but if they go against you, don't worry."

(57) Everyone must know that Allah already knows everything that is going to happen in His creation and He has fixed their measures definitively and irrevocably. There is nothing He has created in either the heavens or the earth that can contradict it, add to it, erase it, change it, decrease or increase it in any way.

This is founded upon what has already been mentioned, that Allah knew about the creation before its existence and fixed its measure before its creation. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Allah ordained the measures of things fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth, while His Throne was on the waters."[260] This means that Allah knew that things would come into existence at the time and in the form His consummate wisdom has fixed. They come into existence just as He knew. The world, with its wonders, could not have been created except by One Who had minutely planned it in advance. Allah says, "Should He not know it, He that created it? And He is the One Who understands the finest mysteries and is well acquainted with them" [67:14].

The extremists among the Mu'tazilah deny that Allah knew all things from eternity. They say that Allah does not know of the actions of a human until he does it. Well exalted be Allah above what they say. Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī said, "Debate the Qadarīyyah with (the concept of) knowledge. If they acquiesce in it, you will pull the

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[260]This is an authentic *ḥadīth* that was discussed earlier.

ground from under their feet. If they deny it, they are infidels." Allah knows that "A" has the ability to do something and that he will do it. He, furthermore, rewards him when he does that act. He knows too that "B" can do it but will not do it, so He will punish him for not doing it. Allah punishes him because he does not do the things that he actually has the ability to do. Allah knows that in advance. Obviously, He does not punish anyone for not doing the things that they were not capable of performing, nor does He enjoin such things upon such people.

One could argue that this necessitates that the servant has the ability to change Allah's knowledge because if Allah knows that he will not do something, but he has the ability to do something, then he has the ability to change what is Allah's knowledge. This is fallacious. The response to this argument is that just because a man has power over an act, it does not mean that he produces a change in the knowledge of Allah. Those who claim such a change can only do so when the act is actually done. But when the act is actually done, Allah already knew that that act will be done, not that it would not be done. It is never the case that an act occurs which Allah "knew" would not happen. On the contrary, if it happens, Allah knew beforehand that it would happen. If it does not happen, Allah knew beforehand that it would not happen. As for us, we do not know if Allah knew about a thing until it happened. His knowledge corresponds to the actual event. It is inconceivable that things happen such as to change His knowledge. Whatever happens is what He knew beforehand. Hence, if a person did not perform a specific act, this does not alter His knowledge whatsoever. All that it shows is that one could do a thing which did not occur. But if it had actually occurred, Allah would have been aware that it will happen rather than that it will not happen.

One might also say that when a thing does not happen, Allah knows that it will not happen, but if a person was able in the first place to do it, it means he altered God's knowledge. This is not correct. It only means that he had power over it but did not do it. If he had done it, then what Allah would have known is that it will happen. Hence, if something in the power of man occurs, it is its occurrence that Allah knew beforehand. These people presume, on the contrary, that the act happened whereas Allah knew that it would not happen. This is false. It is just like saying let us suppose that something happens whereas it does not happen. This is simply a self-contradicting assumption.

Some might still say that if it is impossible that a thing should happen which Allah knew beforehand would not happen, then it cannot be said to be within the power of man. This confusion arises

because the term "impossible" is ambiguous. Here the thing is impossible not because one does not have power over it, or because one cannot do it, or that it is something impossible in itself. On the contrary, it is very much possible, it is within one's power and one can do it. But if it were to happen, Allah knew beforehand that it would happen. And if it does not happen, Allah knew beforehand that it would not happen. But when it was assumed that it would happen, although its prerequisites were not fulfilled, it became impossible, impossible in the sense that something was posited without its necessary prerequisites being realized. When this occurs, everything is impossible!

One of the consequences that follows from the view these people hold is that no one can have power over anything, neither man or Allah, for, if Allah knows in Himself that He will do something, it does not mean that He has lost the power not to do it. Similarly, if He knows in Himself that He will not do a thing, it does not mean that He has no power to do it. The same is true for human acts that He has ordained. And Allah knows best.

(58) This is a fundamental aspect of faith, a necessary aspect of knowledge and of our realizing Allah's Oneness and Lordship. As Allah has said, "He created all things and ordained them in due measures" [25:2]; and, "Allah's command is always a decided decree" [33:38].

Here the author is alluding to what has been discussed concerning belief in *qadr* and Allah's fore-knowledge of things before their creation. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated while responding to a question about faith, "(Faith) is that you believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers and the Last Day, and to believe in fore-ordainment of both good and bad." At the end of the *ḥadīth*, the Messenger said, "'Umar, do you know who the questioner was?" He said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him, "It was Gabriel who had come to teach you your religion." Muslim recorded this *ḥadīth*.[261]

The words, "(This is) our realizing Allah's Oneness and Lordship" mean that one's belief in *tawḥīd* and recognition of

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[261]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 8; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4695; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2610; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Īmān*, 8:97; Aḥmad, 1:28, 51, 52; Ibn Ḥibban, 168. See also Al-Bukhārī, 50, 4777; Ibn Mājah, 64; Muslim, 9; An-Nasā'ī, 8:101-3.

Allah's Lordship is not complete unless one believes in these attributes of Allah. If one believes in a creator other than Allah, he has committed *shirk* (polytheism). If that is true, what is the situation of a person who believes that everyone creates his own actions? For this reason, the Qadarīyyah (free-willers) have been called the Magians of this nation. Such *aḥādīth* have occurred in the works of the *Sunan*.

Abū Dāwūd recorded from Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "The Qadarīyyah are the Magians of this nation. If they become ill, do not visit them. If they die, do not join their funeral prayer."[262]

Abū Dāwūd also recorded from Ḥudhayfah Ibn Al-Yamān that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Every community has its Magians. The Magians of this nation are those say that there is no fore-ordainment. If one of them dies, do not attend their funeral prayers. If one of them gets sick, do not visit him. They belong to the followers of the great Imposter (*ad-Dajjāl*). It is certain that Allah will join them with him."[263]

Abū Dāwūd also recorded from 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Do not mix with the people of *qadr* (those who ḍeny fore-ordainment) and do not converse with them."[264]

At-Tirmidhī recorded from Ibn 'Abbās that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Two groups of people have no portion in Islam: the Murji'ah and the Qadarīyyah."[265]

But all of the *aḥādīth* related from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) concerning the Qadarīyyah are weak.[266] Nevertheless, there are reports concerning them from the Companions that are authentic. For example, Ibn 'Abbās said, "Fore-ordainment is the

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[262]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4691; Al-Ḥakīm, 1:85; Aḥmad, 2:86; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 1150; Al-Ājurī, *Ash-Shari'ah*, p. 190. Also see Ibn Mājah, 92. The chain of this *ḥadīth* is definitely weak. According to Al-Albānī, it has other chains that strengthen it.

[263]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4692; Aḥmad, 5:407; Al-Lalkā'ī, 1155. Its chain is definitely weak.

[264]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4710, *Al-Qadr*, 4720; Aḥmad, 1:30; Al-Lalkā'ī, 1124; Al-Ḥakīm, 1:85. One of the transmitters of the *ḥadīth*, Ḥakīm Ibn Sharik Al-Hudhaylī, is unknown, so it is weak.

[265]At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Qadr*, 2149; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 73. The *ḥadīth* is weak as one of its transmitters, Nazār Ibn Ḥayyān, is weak.

[266]This is the opinion of the majority of the *ḥadīth* scholars. However, Al-Albānī has graded the first *ḥadīth* above as *ḥasan*.

unifying thread of *tawḥīd*. Hence, whoever professes Allah's unity but denies fore-ordainment, his denial contradicts his profession of *tawḥīd*."[267] This is because the belief in fore-ordainment involves the belief that Allah's knowledge is eternal, that what He has made manifest is part of His unlimited knowledge, and that He has determined in advance the measures of things He has created. Many people, such as polytheists, Sabaeans, philosophers and others have gone astray on this issue and have denied that Allah has knowledge of things particular or otherwise. Consequently, this has led them to deny fore-ordainment.

As for Allah's omnipotence and power over all things, this is denied by the Qadarīyyah in general, since they say that Allah did not create the actions of human beings. They consider these acts outside of Allah's creative will and power.

They also deny the fore-ordainment of human destinies which has been clearly established in the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and consensus of the nation. That it is why they have been generally condemned by the Companions and later scholars. Ibn 'Umar, for example, was asked about people who said that their acts were not fore-ordained and that they did them new. He said, "Tell them that I have nothing to do with them and that they have nothing to do with me."

Qadr is the ordaining of things according to the knowledge Allah has of them. It involves the following principles. First, Allah knows things before they come into existence. This means that His knowledge is eternal. This is a refutation of those who deny that His knowledge is eternal. Second, fore-ordainment (*taqdīr*) is to fix the measures of things, namely the properties and attributes which they will have. Allah has said, "He created all things and ordained them in due measure" [25:2]. This means that creation involves two kinds of pre-measurement: ordaining things as such or fixing their measures, and doing so before they come into existence. Since Allah has fixed the measures of things in all their details, qualitative and quantitative, His knowledge of each and every individual thing is perfect. Hence, those who think that Allah knows only the universals and not the particulars are wrong. Qadr involves eternal knowledge as it involves the knowledge of each and every individual thing.

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[267] Al-Lalkā'ī, Sharḥ, 1112; Al-Ājurī, *Ash-Shari'ah,* p. 215; Ibn Battah, *Al-Ibānah* (Riḍā Mu'it, ed.; Makkah: Al-Maktabah Al-Fayṣalīyyah, 1404/1984), 2:234-235. But the narration is weak. Al-Haythamī noted that Aṭ-Ṭabarānī ascribed these words to the Prophet (peace be upon him) but one of its transmitters, Hānī Ibn Al-Mutawakkil, is weak. (See *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, 7:197.)

Third, *qadr* means that Allah reveals detailed information about things before their creation. Therefore, it is not ruled out that some of His servants may know about various things before they are brought into existence (if Allah chooses to tell them such). This further enforces the truth that their Creator must be even more knowledgeable about them. If He has informed His servants about them, He cannot Himself lack that knowledge. Fourth, *qadr* means that Allah is free to decide what to do, or to create what He wills, and nothing is incumbent or obligatory upon him. Fifth and finally, it means that the things that He ordains are contingent, that they come into being after they were not there. He first determines their measures and then creates them.

(59) So woe to those who quarrel about fore-ordainment, who delve into it with a diseased heart, trying to unravel its profound mysteries through delusions, and who land themselves deep in sin by their baseless, lying conjectures.

There is for the heart life and death, disease and health, just as there is for the body; in fact, it is even greater for the heart. Allah says, "Can he who was dead, to whom We gave life and a light whereby he can walk among men, be like him who is in the depths of darkness from which he can never come out?" [6:122]. That is, he was dead because of his infidelity (*kufr*) and Allah gave him life through faith. A living and sound heart, by its nature, abhors and flees from falsehood and evil when presented with it; it will never turn to it. But the dead (or diseased) heart does not distinguish between good and evil. As 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd once said, "One who does not have a heart that can distinguish right from wrong is certainly doomed."[268] the same is true of the heart that is sick because of lust and desires; the more sick it is, the more it is attracted to evil.

Diseases of the heart are of two kinds, disease of lust and desires and disease of doubt and skepticism. The disease of doubt is far more harmful than the disease of lust. The most damaging doubt is the one that concerns fore-ordainment. The heart becomes severely ill, but the sick person does not realize it due to his turning away from correct knowledge and its causes. Sometimes his heart is

[268] Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 8564. Al-Haythamī notes that the transmitters of this tradition are among the transmitters of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections (*Majma' az-Zawā'id*, 7:275).

completely dead and he does not even feel it. The sign of such death is that he ceases to feel the pinch of evil deeds and the pain of not knowing truth while entertaining false beliefs. If the heart is alive, it feels pain by the presence of evil, and the stronger its life, the more acute is that feeling. A poet has said:

"For the mean, meanness is not at all painful,
The dead hardly feel the pain of a wound."[269]

Sometimes he feels that he is ill, but it is difficult for him to take bitter medicine and have perseverance in doing so. He therefore prefers to remain sick rather than swallow the bitter medicine. His medicine, though, goes to fight his desires and lusts, though this is the most difficult thing for him to do. But at the same time, there is nothing more beneficial for him.

Sometimes he is able to persevere for a time but then loses his will. He is not able to stick with it and he stops. This is all because his awareness of his great disease is inadequate and his determination is weak. He is like a person who has to pass through a fearful tunnel in order to gain peace and tranquility. He needs patience and certainty. If he lacks them, he is likely to turn back from the middle of the tunnel, especially if he has no one accompanying him on that journey. He is likely to think that if others have not traveled it before him, he should all the more not risk it. This is the condition of the majority of mankind, who have consequently met their doom. A man of faith and determination, on the other hand, is not discouraged if few have traveled the road or if none can accompany him. In his heart he feels the company of the first band of travelers about whom Allah has said, "Those on whom is grace of Allah: the prophets, the sincere (lovers of truth), the martyrs, and the righteous (who do good); and what a beautiful fellowship" [4:69].

Abū Muḥammad 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Ismā'īl, known as Abū Shamah, wrote in *Al-Bid'ah wa al-Ḥawādith*, "Whenever one is asked to adhere to the *jamā'ah* (the community), what is intended is that one should abide by the truth and follow it. However, there are more rejecters than abiders. The truth is what the first band of Muslims at the time of the Prophet, his Companions, lived by. The views of the mistaken and misguided people who came afterwards have no value."[270] Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣrī said, "The way of the

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[269]This is part of an ode composed by Al-Mutanabbī. See his *Diwān* with commentary by Al-'Ākbarī (Muṣṭafa As-Saqqā Ibrāhīm Al-Abyārī and 'Abdul-Hafīẓ Ash-Shalabī, eds.; Cairo: Maktabat Muṣṭafa Al-Ḥalabī, 1391/1971), 4:92-101.

[270]Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān min Masā'id ash-Shayṭān* (Muḥammad Ḥāmid

Sunnah is between the ways of the fanatic and the lackadaisical. Stick to it; Allah will bless you. The followers of the Sunnah were in the minority in the olden days, and in the minority in the remaining days – people who did not indulge in affluence like the affluent or in unauthorized innovations like the innovators, and persevered on the path of the Sunnah until they meet their Lord. Try to live as they lived."

The sign of a sick heart is aversion to a good diet and useful medicine, with fondness for a bad diet and harmful drugs. There are thus four things involved here: good diet and useful medicine, bad diet and harmful drugs. The healthy heart prefers the good and the useful over the bad and the harmful. The sick heart is the opposite of that.

The best food is the food of *īmān* (faith). The most useful medicine is the medicine of the Qur'ān; both contain food and medicine. Whoever seeks remedies in other than the Qur'ān and Sunnah is then the most ignorant and most misguided of people.[271] Verily, Allah says, "Say: It is a guide and a healing to those who believe. And for those who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears and it is a blindness in their eyes. They are called to from afar" [41:44]; "We send down the Qur'ān, which is healing and a mercy to those who believe. To the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss" [17:82]; and "Mankind, there has come to you a direction from your Lord and healing for the diseases in your hearts, and for those who believe a Guidance and a Mercy" [10:57].

The Qur'ān is the complete healer for all the diseases of the heart and the body and the medicine for both this life and the Hereafter, but not everyone is qualified to be treated by it. However, if a sick man treats himself in the light of its prescriptions and uses its medicine sincerely and in good faith, and observes the precautions that it prescribes, his disease will not persist. How can a disease persist in the face of the words of the One Who created the heavens and the earth, words that will make the mountains cleave asunder and the earth crack if they were to descend on them! There is no disease of the heart or the body but the Qur'ān has a word about its cause, treatment, and the precautions one should take. But this knowledge is revealed to those whom Allah has given insight in His Book.

As for the author's statement, "trying to unravel its profound mysteries through delusions," refers to fore-ordainment, but it is the

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Al-Fiqī, ed.; Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), 1:69.

[271] Ibid, 1:68-70.

mystery of Allah among the creation. Those who try to disentangle it actually try to know the Unseen. Allah has said, "He alone knows the Unseen, nor does He make anyone acquainted with His mysteries, except a messenger whom He has chosen" [72:26-27]. And the words, "and who land themselves deep in sin by their baseless, lying conjectures," refers to surmises about fore-ordainment.

(60) The Throne and the Footstool are realities.

Allah makes this very clear in His Book. Allah says, "He is the Lord of the Glorious Throne" [85:15]; "Raised high above ranks, He is the Lord of the Throne" [40:15]; "Allah Most Glorious is firmly established on the Throne" [20:5]; "There is no god but He, the Lord of the Honorable Throne" [23:116]; "Allah, there is no god but He, Lord of the Supreme Throne" [27:26]; "Those who sustain the Throne and those around it sing glory and praise to their Lord, believe in Him, and implore forgiveness for those who believe" [40:7]; "And eight will that Day bear the Throne of the Lord above them" [69:17]; "And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne on all sides, singing glory and praise to their Lord" [39:75].

As for the *aḥādīth* on the subject, one that occurs in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is a supplication that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to say when faced with a problem: "There is no god but Allah, the Glorious, the Forebearing. There is no god but He, the Lord of the Supreme Throne. There is no god but Allah, the Lord of the heavens and the Lord of the earth, and the Lord of the Honorable Throne."[272]

Aḥmad recorded another *ḥadīth* reported by 'Abbās Ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭālib that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) once asked, "Do you know what the distance between the heavens and the earth is?" They said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "It is the distance of a five hundred years' journey. The same is the distance between one heaven and another. The same is the distance between the two sides, the lower and upper part of the one heaven. Beyond the seventh heaven, there is an ocean as deep as the distance between Heaven and the earth. Beyond the ocean there are eight huge goats whose hooves are as far removed from their knees as Heaven from the earth. The Throne of Allah is beyond all of these. Its lower side is as far from its upper side as Heaven is from the earth. And Allah is above that. And nothing from the actions of

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[272]Al-Bukhārī, 6345, 6346, 7426, 7431; Muslim, 2730; At-Tirmidhī, 3453; Aḥmad, 1:228, 245, 259, 280, 339, 356.

human beings is hidden from him." This was also recorded by Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah.[273]

Abū Dawūd and others have recorded through their chain of authorities in the *ḥadīth* that mentions the creation of the Throne that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "The Throne of Allah is on the heavens like this," and he rounded his fingers in the shape of a dome.[274]

Al-Bukhārī recorded another *ḥadīth* in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "When you pray for Paradise, pray for *al-Firdaws*. It is the highest part of Paradise and the center of Paradise, and above it is the Throne of the Merciful."[275] There are two narrations of this *ḥadīth*. One states, "and above it is the Throne," and the other narration states, "Its roof is the Throne."

Some of the theologians claim that the Throne is spherical and encompasses the universe from all sides. Sometimes they call it *al-falak al-atlas* (the outer spherical world) or the "ninth sphere". This is not correct. It is confirmed in the texts that it has legs that the angels will carry. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "On the Day of Judgment, everyone will give a cry and fall in a swoon. I will be the first to arise. Lo and behold, Moses will be there, holding on to one of the legs of the Throne. I do not know whether he will have regained his senses before me or will have been spared swooning since he already experienced it at Sinai."[276]

Literally the word *'arsh* means the throne of a king. Allah said about Bilqīs, "She had a magnificent throne (*'arsh*)" [27:23]. It is not something spherical. Arabs do not understand that meaning and

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[273]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4733; At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr,* 3320; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 193; Aḥmad, 1:206, 207; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, p. 399; Al-Ḥakīm, 2:500-501. This *ḥadīth* was reported by 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umayrah from Al-Aḥnaf Ibn Qays, from Al-'Abbās Ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. No one considers 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umayrah reliable except Ibn Ḥibban, but it was Ibn Ḥibban's custom to consider unknown narrators as trustworthy, a practice that differs from that of the other *ḥadīth* scholars. Al-Bukhārī stated that it is not known that he ever heard from Al-Aḥnaf. Ibn Al-'Arabī considers this *ḥadīth* and others similar to it to actually have their source in the stories of the Jews and Christians. Al-Albānī simply calls the *ḥadīth* weak.

[274]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4726; Ad-Dārimī, *Ar-Radd 'alā al-Jahmīyyah*, p. 24; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, pp. 417-418; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 92; Al-Ajurī, *Ash-Shari'ah,* p. 293. However, the *ḥadīth* is weak. Al-Albānī observes that this *ḥadīth* (which also mentions the creaking of the Throne) is not authentic.

[275]That it is not the exact wording from Al-Bukhārī, wherein it states, "It is the middle of Paradise and the highest of Paradise." Recorded by Al-Bukhārī, 7433; Aḥmad, 2:335.

[276]Discussed earlier. It was recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

the Qur'ān was revealed in the language of the Arabs. It must mean a throne with legs that the angels might hold and carry. It is like a dome placed on the universe and its roof. Umayyah Ibn Abī As-Salat has stated:

> They glorify Allah and He deserves glory.
> He is our Lord in the heavens, the Magnificent.
> He has raised a spacious structure that baffles man.
> And over it, He has put his Throne,
> too high for the eyes to scan.
> Around it are angels bowing their heads in awe.[277]

'Abdullah Ibn Ar-Rawaḥah, may Allah be pleased with him, said in an ode refuting a charge his wife made against him:

> I swear that the word of Allah is true
> That the Fire is the abode of the infidels,
> That the Throne floats on water,
> That the Lord of the Worlds is on the Throne
> Which is borne by mighty angels
> consecrated by the Lord.

These lines were mentioned by Ibn 'Abdul-Barr and others.[278]

Abū Dawūd recorded a *ḥadīth* in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "I have permission to tell you that one of the angels that holds the Throne of Allah is such a huge being that the distance between the lobe of his ear and his shoulder is a seven hundred years' journey."[279] In a version recorded by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, the distance was said to be the seven hundred years' flight of a bird.

For those who distort the Word of Allah and consider the Throne to mean 'kingdom', how will they deal with Allah's words, "And eight (angels) will that Day bear the Throne of your Lord above them" [69:17], or the verse, "His Throne was over the waters" [11:7]? Will they say that eight angels will bear the Kingdom of Allah on that Day or that His Kingdom was over the waters or that Moses will hold the legs of His Kingdom (on the Day

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[277]*Dīwān Ummayyah Ibn Abī Aṣ-Ṣalāt* ('Abdul-Ḥafīẓ As-Saṭlī, ed.; Damascus: Al-Maṭba At-Ta'āwunīyyah, 1394/1974), pp. 399-400.

[278]Ibn 'Abdul-Barr, *Al-Isti'ab fī Ma'rafat al-Ashab*, printed on the margin of Ibn Hajr's *Al-Iṣāba* (Ṭaḥa Muḥammad Zaynī, ed.; Cairo: Maktabat Al-Kulliyat Al-Azharīyyah, 1397/1977), 2:287. See also Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, p. 340, 342; Adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā*, 1:238.

[279]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4727; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, p. 398. It is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

of Judgment)? Will any sensible person who knows what he is saying actually make such statements?

As for the Footstool (*al-Kursī*), Allah has said, "His Footstool extends over the heavens" [2:255].

Some people say that the Footstool is the same as the Throne. The correct opinion is that they are different. This has been recorded from Ibn 'Abbās and others. Ibn Abī Shaybah recorded in *Ṣifat al-'Arsh* and Al-Ḥākim in *Al-Mustadrak* – and he said that this narration was authentic according to Al-Bukhārī's and Muslim's standards but they did not record it – from Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr that Ibn 'Abbās said, while commenting on the verse, "His Footstool extends over the heavens" [2:255], "The *Kursī* is a footstool. And as for the Throne, only Allah knows what it is exactly." These words have been ascribed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) but the correct narration is as a statement of Ibn 'Abbās.[280] As-Sudī said, "The heavens and the earth are inside the Footstool and the Footstool is in front of the Throne."[281]

Ibn Jarīr recorded that Abū Dharr narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "In comparison to the Throne, the Footstool is nothing more than a small iron ring in a boundless desert."[282]

Some say that the *Kursī* is His knowledge. This has been ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās.[283] But what has been authentically narrated from him is what we have just quoted from the book of Ibn Abī Shaybah. All other things attributed to him are mere conjecture and erroneous theology. The Chair is simply a footstool in front of the Throne like a step. This is what a number of the Elders have stated.

(61) Allah is not in need of the Throne and what is beneath it. He encompasses all and is above everything. His creation is not able to encompass Him.

Regarding the words, "Allah is not in need of the Throne and what is beneath it," Allah says in the Qur'ān, "Indeed, Allah is

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[280]See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 1:457.
[281]As-Suyūṭī, *Ad-Durr al-Manthur*, 2:18.
[282]*Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī* (title given by Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr to their edition of Ibn Jarīr's commentary in which they have numbered the *aḥādīth* and reports [Cairo: Dār Al-Ma'ārif, 1987], hereinafter simply referred to as *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*), *ḥadīth* no. 5794. See also Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, pp. 404-405. But the chains for all these *aḥādīth* are very weak.
[283]*Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, *ḥadīth* nos. 5787, 5788.

altogether independent of His creatures" [29:6], and "Allah is free of all wants, Worthy of all praise" [35:15]. The author mentioned these words at this point because, after mentioning the Throne and the Chair he wanted to point out that Allah does not depend on or need that Throne or what is below the Throne. Thereby, he makes it clear that Allah's creating the Throne and ascending it was not done due to any need. Instead, it was done for some other reason that His wisdom determined. If something is above some other thing, it does not follow, therefore, that the latter surrounds or encompasses the former or holds and sustains it; nor does it follow that the former needs the latter and depends upon it. Look at heaven, how it is above the earth but not in need of it. Allah is incomparably superior to the heaven. So how could His being on the Throne imply that He depends upon it or needs it?

Transcendence (*'ulū*) is an attribute of Allah. It means that He sustains with His power the entire universe, which depends upon Him for its existence, while He is above and independent of it and encompasses it. He is above the Throne and sustains it with His power and sustains all those who bear it. He does not at all depend on the Throne; on the contrary, the Throne depends upon Him. He encompasses it, but it does not encompass Him. He surrounds it, but it does not surround Him. These attributes of Allah are exclusively His. They are not shared by any other being.

Those who deny that Allah is above the Throne would not do so if they understood the concept as we do. They would then be guided to the straight path. They would realize that what has been revealed is in agreement with reason and they would follow the evidence. But they diverge from the evidence and hence, stray from the straight path. The correct course in such matters is the course which Imām Mālik took when he was asked about *istiwā* in the verse, "He then ascended (*istiwā*) the Throne" [7:54]. He said, "*Istiwā* is known, but its modality is not known." the same answer, it has been reported, was given by Umm Salamah. One narration even ascribes this statement to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) himself.[284]

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[284]Ibn Taymīyyah wrote that this statement has been attributed to both Umm Salāmah and the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). As a statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is definitely not authentic. As for a statement of Umm Salamah, Al-Lalkā'ī narrated a tradition attributing these words to her (*Sharḥ 'Aqīdat Ahl as-Sunnah*, 3:397). But one of its transmitters, Muḥammad Ibn Ashras As-Salmī, is accused of lying. That it is the statement of Imām Mālik has been mentioned by many a scholar. See Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, p. 408; Ibn Hajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 13:406.

The author stated, "He encompasses all and is above everything," which means that Allah encompasses all and is above all. But some manuscripts of the *Creed* state, "Allah encompasses everything that is above the Throne."[285] the first reading is correct. It means that Allah encompasses everything and is above everything. Allah knows best, but perhaps the second reading was just a mistake of one of the scribes, who was then followed by later scribes; or perhaps some misled heretics did this intentionally in order to alter the meaning and avoid the idea of Allah's transcendence. There is no third possible explanation for this mistake. It has been established that the Throne is above all created things and nothing created is above it. There is, therefore, no sense in saying that Allah encompasses everything that is above the Throne; actually, there is nothing above it to be encompassed. We conclude, therefore, that the word "and" is part of the text and that the text should read, "He encompasses all things and is above all things."

As for Allah's encompassing everything, Allah has stated the following, "But Allah does encompass them from behind" [85:20]; "Indeed, it is He That does encompass all things" [41:54]; "But to Allah belong all things in the heavens and on the earth, and He it is That encompasses all things" [4:126]. But His encompassing does not mean that He is like a sphere, surrounding things with everything inside of His essence. Greatly exalted is Allah above that. What it means is that He encompasses them by His knowledge, power and majesty, that before His majesty things are nothing more than a mustard seed. It is narrated that Ibn 'Abbās said, "The seven heavens and the seven earths and all that there is between them are in the hand of Allah just as a mustard seed is in the hand of one of you." It is obvious that when we have a mustard seed in our hand, we can grip it and hold it or put it down. However, in either case, we are different from it, beyond it, and above it in every respect.

What then about Allah, the Great, Whose greatness transcends all description? He can, if He wills, take all the heavens and earth in His grip now, as He will do on the Day of Judgment, and He will not be acquiring a power that He did not have before. If this is the case, then there is nothing strange in saying that Allah will come near to a point of the world even though He will be on His Throne beyond the heavens, or in saying that He will bring any one of His creatures near to Him. Those who deny that do not have the proper understanding of Allah that He deserves. In a famous *ḥadīth* about Beatific Vision, it is reported that Abū Razin asked the Messenger of

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[285]This transmission is without the conjunction wa (and).

Allah (peace be upon him), "How will we see Allah, O Prophet? He is One and we will be many." the Prophet (peace be upon him) answered, "I will give you an example from the beings He has created. Look at the moon. It is one, but all of you see it and it appears to all of you. Allah is obviously far greater than the moon."[286] This makes it clear that Allah is grander and greater than anything. This *ḥadīth* removes all doubts and answers all questions.

Concerning Allah being above the creations, Allah says, "He is the Irresistible Power ruling over the beings He has created" [6:18]; and, "They (the angels) all revere their Lord, High above them" [16:50]. There is also the *ḥadīth* we just mentioned about the goats of the mountains: "The Throne is above that and Allah is above all of that."[287] We also quoted the couplet from 'Abdullah Ibn Rawāḥah which speaks about Allah's transcendence. 'Abdullah recitedit before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and received his approval and he smiled at it.[288] Ḥassan Ibn Thābit gave the following ode mentioning Allah's transcendence:

> With Allah's leave I witness that Muḥammad
> is the Prophet of the One Who is above the heavens;
> that both John and his father
> did good things that pleased God;
> that the Son of Mary, whom the Jews denied,
> was a prophet sent by the Lord of the Throne;
> that the prophet who was sent to the people of Ahqāf
> called them to submit to Allah and did justly.[289]

Upon hearing these lines, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "I also bear witness."[290]

Abū Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "When Allah decreed to create the world, He wrote in a book which is with Him above the Throne, 'My mercy outdoes my

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[286]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4731; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 180; Aḥmad, 4:11, 12. The chain of this *ḥadīth* is weak.

[287]This *ḥadīth* is very weak.

[288]As for the *ḥadīth* that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) approved of these lines, it is reported by a Successor directly from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) with no mention of the name of the Companion he heard it from.

[289]*Diwān Ḥassan Ibn Thābit* (Walīd 'Arafāt, ed.; Dār Ṣādir, 1394/1974), p. 403.

[290]This saying of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was narrated in a *mursal* tradition (where the name of the Companion has been left out of the chain). See Adh-Dhahabī, *As-Siyar*, 2:518-519.

wrath.'"[291] A variant of this *ḥadīth* states, "My mercy will overcome my wrath" [recorded by Al-Bukhārī and others].

Ibn Mājah recorded from Jābir that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "When people are in Paradise enjoying its pleasures, a light will shine. They will look at it and, lo and behold, Allah, the Mighty and Glorious, will look on them from above. He will say, 'Peace be upon you, people of Paradise!'" At this point, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) recited the verse, "Peace! – a word of salutation from a Lord Most Merciful" [36:58]. He then continued, "Allah will look at them, and they will look at Him. They will not remove their eyes from Him to look at any other bounty as long as they are allowed to see Him."[292]

Muslim recorded from the Prophet (peace be upon him), concerning the meaning of the verse, "He is the First and the Last, the Evident (Aẓ-Ẓāhir) and the Immanent" [57:3]; "You are the First, there is nothing before You. You are the Last, there is nothing after You. You are the Evident (Aẓ-Ẓāhir) and there is nothing above You. You are the Immanent, there is nothing below you."[293] Aẓ-Ẓāhir is from *ẓuhūr*, which means 'to be above', as in the verse, "They were powerless to scale (*yaẓharū*) it" [18:97]; that is, to cross over (*ya'lū*) it. These four names of Allah form two pairs of contrasting names, one signifying His eternity and everlastingness and the other His transcendence and nearness.

Abū Dāwūd recorded from Jubayr Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Jubayr Ibn Mut'im from his father, on the authority of his grandfather, who said that a Bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and said, "Messenger of Allah, we are in great trouble. Our children have died, our property has been destroyed and the cattle have perished. Pray to Allah to send us rain. We request you to intercede with Allah for us and we beseech Allah to intercede with you on our behalf." the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Woe to you! Do you know what you have said?" He then kept repeating "Glory be to Allah" until his Companions around him felt very sorry for what the Bedouin had said. He then said, "Woe to you! Allah is too great to intercede with anybody whom He has created. He is exalted above all that. Do you know what Allah is? He is on His Throne and His Throne is above His heavens, like a

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[291] Al-Bukhārī, 3194, 7404, 7422, 7453, 7553, 7554; Muslim, *At-Tawbah*, 2751; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3537; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 2495; Aḥmad, 2:242, 258, 260, 293, 358, 397, 433, 466.

[292] Discussed earlier. It is a weak *ḥadīth*.

[293] Discussed earlier, recorded by Muslim, it is authentic.

dome over them." He then rounded his fingers to demonstrate this. He then added, "The Throne appears to crack under Him as a saddle appears to crack under the weight of the rider."[294]

When Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh announced his judgment in the case of the Banū Qurayẓah and said that their warriors should be killed and their children should be taken captive, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Your judgment is the judgment of Allah from above the seven heavens."[295] This is an authentic *ḥadīth.* Al-Umawī mentioned it in detail in his work on the battles (*maghāzī*) of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded the gist of the *ḥadīth.*

Al-Bukhārī also recorded concerning Zaynab, that she was able to boast among the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), "Your families married you (to the Prophet) but Allah married me (to him) from above the seven heavens."[296]

One day 'Umar passed by an old woman who stopped him and talked with him for some time. A man said, "Commander of the Faithful, you have kept the people waiting because of this old woman." He said, "Woe to you! Do you know who she is? She is the one whose complaint Allah heard from above the seven heavens. She is Khawlah, about whom it was revealed, 'Allah has heard (and accepted) the statement of the woman who pleads with you concerning her husband and carries her complaint (in prayer) to Allah" [58:11]. This was recorded by Ad-Dārimī.[297]

Concerning the verse (quoting the words of Satan), "Then I will assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left" [7:17], Mujahid narrated that Ibn 'Abbās said, "He was not able to see, 'From above them,' because he knew that Allah is above them."[298]

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[294]This *ḥadīth* was discussed earlier; it is weak.

[295]Al-Bukhārī, 3043, 3804, 4121, 6262; Muslim, *Al-Jihād*, 1768; Aḥmad, 3:22; Abū Dāwūd Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, *Musnad* (Hyderabad, India: 1321 A.H.; reprint- Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'ārif, n.d.; hereinafter referred to as Aṭ-Ṭayālisī), *ḥadīth* no. 2240.

[296]Al-Bukhārī, *At-Tawḥīd*, 7420; At-Tirmidhī, *At-Tafsīr*, 3213; An-Nasā'ī, *An-Nikāḥ*, 6:80.

[297]Ad-Dārimī, *Ar-Radd 'alā al-Jahmīyyah* (Damascus: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Islamī, 1381/1961), p. 26. Adh-Dhahabī observed that the link between 'Umar and Abū Yazīd Al-Madanī, who narrated this *ḥadīth*, is not mentioned. Abū Yazīd himself did not meet 'Umar. See *Al-'Ulū*, abridged by Muḥammad Nāṣir ad-Dīn Al-Albānī (Beirut: Al-Maktab Al-Islamī, 1401/1981), p. 113.

[298]*Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, no. 14382; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 1:204. To Ibn 'Abbās the chain is weak. Aṭ-Ṭabarī records a similar statement from Qatādah (*ḥadīth* no. 14372).

Anyone familiar with the *ḥadīth* of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and statements of the Elders will find numerous statements confirming Allah's being above the world.

No doubt, when Allah created the creation, He did not create it within His holy being. Allah is exalted above that. For He is the One and Absolute Being, Who neither begets nor is He begotten. He created the creation outside of Himself. Were He not above the world, although He is other than and separate from it, then He would have to be something, in which case He would have to be the opposite. This means that He would have to be below it, which is plainly wrong and unbecoming of Allah. The opposite of above is below, but this is a blameworthy description, as it is the habitat of Satan, his followers and his soldiers.

If someone says that we do not accept that denying that He is above must imply that He is below, the reply is that, if you cannot say that He is either above or below, then He is not actually a being in and of Himself. When you affirm that He is a being in and of Himself that is not part of the world and He exists beyond it, and that He is not merely an idea in the mind but a being existing, and if you admit that anything that exists out there will be, as every rational being says, either in the world or outside of it - and to deny that will be more outrageous than denying the self-evident and necessary truths of reason – then the most reasonable alternative is to say that Allah is above the world. Now, if the attribute that He transcends the world and is above it is an attribute of perfection, not a defect or imperfection, and it does not contradict reason or violate the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the consensus, then to deny transcendence will be committing an absurdity from which the religion of Allah is completely free. How can one deny that, when the truth is that we cannot believe in the existence of Allah, or in the revelation to the prophets or in their books or teachings, unless we believe in His transcendence. How can one deny that when it is also supported by unclouded reason and the basic instincts of man?

The texts that clearly state Allah's transcendence of the world and His being above His creation are of twenty different types:[299]

First, texts in which the preposition "from" (*min*) has been used along with "above" (*fawq*) which together emphasize that one thing is above the other. For example, "They fear their Lord from high above them" [16:50].

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[299]See also Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Mukhtasar aṣ-Ṣawā'iq al-Murṣalāh*, 2:205-217.

Second, texts wherein the same idea is stated without using the preposition "from". For example, "He is the Irresistible power ruling over the beings He has created" [6:18, 61].

Third, texts that describe things going up (*al-'uruj*) to Him, such as, "The angels and the spirit go up (*ta'ruju*) to Him," and the Prophet's *ḥadīth*, "The angels who are with you in the night go up to Him, and He asks them..."[300]

Fourth, texts that speak of things ascending to Him (*aṣ-ṣu'ud*). For example, "To Him ascends (*yaṣ'adu*) all words of purity" [35:10].

Fifth, texts that clearly state that Allah raises up (*raf'*) some beings to Himself. For example, "Nay, Allah raised him up to Himself" [4:150], and "Jesus! I will take you and raise you to Myself" [3:55].

Sixth, texts that clearly refer to Allah's unqualified transcendence (*al-'ulū al-muṭlaq*) that embraces all kinds of transcendence in being, power and honor. Allah says, "He is the Most High (Al-'Ālī), the Supreme" [2:255], and, "He is the Most High, Most Great" [34:23]; also, "He is the Most High, Most Wise" [42:51.

Seventh, texts that state that the Qur'ān has been sent down (*tanzīl*) from Allah. These verses include, "The revelation (*tanzīl*)[301] of this Book is from Allah Exalted in Power Full of Knowledge" [40:2]. "The revelation (*tanzīl*) of this Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom" [39:1]; "A revelation (*tanzīl*) from (Allah) Most Gracious, Most Merciful" [41:2]; "It is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of all Praise" [41:42]; "Say: the Holy Spirit has brought (down) the revelation from your Lord in truth" [16:102]; "*Ḥā Mīm*. By the Book that makes things clear, We sent it down during a blessed night, for We ever wish to warn (against evil). In that night is made distinct every affair of wisdom by command from Our presence. For We ever send revelations" [44:1-5].

Eighth, texts that say that some beings are with Him and some are closer to Him than others. For example, "Those who are near to your Lord" [2:106]; and, "To Him belong all creatures in the heavens and on the earth, even those who are near to Him..." [21:19]. The latter verse distinguishes between those who belong to

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[300]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī, 555, 3223, 7429, 7486; Muslim, *Al-Masājid,* 632; An-Nasā'ī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 3:14-19; Aḥmad, 5:447, 448.

[301]The word *tanzīl* is usually simply translated as 'revelation' but it implies coming from above.

Him in general, and those who are near to Him from among the angels and men in particular. And the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said about the Book that Allah wrote and is with Him, "It is with Him above the Throne."[302]

Ninth, texts that state very clearly that Allah is *fī as-samā* which the commentators of the Qur'ān from among the Ahl as-Sunnah understand to mean that He is above the heavens. They take *fī* in the sense of *'alā*, 'on' or 'above', or *as-samā* in the sense of *'ulū* (the highest heaven). They do not differ on this point and there is no other possible interpretation of the phrase.

Tenth, texts that state that Allah established Himself (*istawa*) on (*'alā*) the Throne (*al-'arsh*), which is the uppermost part of the created world. Usually this expression is prefaced by the word *thumma* (then), which indicates that Allah established Himself following another action after the lapse of some time.

Eleventh, texts that state that hands are to be raised towards Allah in prayer. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Allah is shy to have someone raise his hands up towards Him in prayer and then turn them down without giving him anything."[303] The statement that raising hands in supplication is just like facing the Ka'bah in prayer, meaning neither of them suggests the direction Allah is in, is not correct. The sky is not merely a *qiblah* (direction) for supplication, as every supplicant knows, as we will explain later, God willing.

Twelfth, the texts that clearly state that Allah descends (*yanzil*) to the lowest heaven every night. Everyone knows that descending means coming down from a higher place.

Thirteenth, texts that mention pointing upwards to Allah, as the one who is most knowledgeable of Him (the Prophet) did. He knew what should be predicated of Him and what should not. He said to the largest gathering he ever had, and in the most sacred place on the most sacred day, "You will be asked about me. What will you say?" They replied, "We will testify that you have conveyed the words of Allah, delivered His message and did your best for our good." He then raised his finger towards the sky, towards One Who is above him and above everything, and said, "My Lord, witness (what Your servants have said)."[304] It is as if we are even now seeing him raise

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[302]Discussed earlier. Recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

[303]At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3551; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1488; Ibn Mājah, *Ad-Du'ā'*, 3865; Ibn Ḥibban, 2399, 2400. At-Tirmidhī called this *ḥadīth ḥasan* (good), while Ibn Ḥibban considered it authentic.

[304]Part of a long *ḥadīth*, Muslim, *Al-Ḥajj*, 1218; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Manāsik*, 1905; Ibn

his honorable finger toward Allah and hearing the words, "My Lord! Bear witness." We do testify that he has fully conveyed the words of Allah, preached His message as he was asked, and did the best for the nation that he could do. Verily, he has left nothing for anyone to explain, or elucidate or expound. And we thank Allah for that.

Fourteenth, the *ḥadīth* wherein the one who knew Allah best, who was the greatest well-wisher for his nation, and who had the power to put his ideas in most precise and unambiguous terms, questioned more than one of his people, "Where is Allah?"[305]

Fifteenth, the *aḥādīth* which state that the Prophet (peace be upon him) testified to the faith of those who said that Allah above in (*fī*) the heavens.

Sixteenth, the verse wherein Allah quotes Pharaoh as wanting to ascend in the sky and see Moses' God so that he could refute Moses' statement that Allah is above the heavens: "Haman! Build me a lofty palace that I may attain the ways and means – the ways and means of the heavens that I may ascend to the God of Moses. But as far as I am concerned, I think Moses is a liar" [40:36-37]. Hence, the Jahmīyyah, who deny that Allah is above the world, are followers of Pharaoh and those who affirm it are followers of Moses and Muḥammad.

Seventeenth, the *ḥadīth* that says that the night the Prophet was taken up the heavens, he commuted between Moses and Allah, going up to the Lord and coming down to Moses time and again in order to reduce the number of daily prayers.[306]

Eighteenth, the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah which say that the Believers will see Allah in the Hereafter. A *ḥadīth* states that they will see Allah as they see the sun and full moon on a clear day. It is obvious, therefore, that they will see Allah above them. The Prophet made this quite clear in another *ḥadīth* when he said, "While the people of Paradise are enjoying their bounties, a light will shine. They will raise their heads and, lo and behold, Allah will be watching them from above. He will say, 'People of Paradise, peace be upon you.'" At that moment, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) recited the verse, "Peace – a word from a Lord Most Merciful" [36:58]. Then he added, "Then Allah will hide Himself, leaving behind His mercy and blessings on their abode forever."

Mājah, *Al-Manāsik*, 3074.

[305]These words occur in a *ḥadīth* recorded by Muslim, Al-*Masājid,* 537; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 930; An-Nasā'ī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 3:14-19; Aḥmad, 5:447, 448.

[306]Discussed earlier. Recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

This *ḥadīth* was recorded by Aḥmad in his *Musnad* as well as other compilers on the authority of Jābir.[307]

One cannot deny Allah's transcendence without also denying the vision of Him. This is why the Jahmīyyah have denied both while the Ahl as-Sunnah have affirmed both. This also explains why those who affirm the vision of Allah but deny His transcendence waver between the two propositions and fail to affirm either. We have noted these points in a brief manner. Were we to expound on them, the arguments would increase up to a thousand in number. Let those who deny divine transcendence reply to these points. I am sure they will not be able to respond to even one argument convincingly.

The sayings of the Elders concerning Allah's transcendence are many indeed. For example, Shaykh al-Islām Abū Ismā'īl Al-Anṣārī recorded in his book *Al-Fārūq*, with his chain of authorities, that Abū Mut Al-Balkhī asked Abū Ḥanīfah about a person who had said, "I do not know if my Lord is in Heaven or on earth." He said, "He has committed blasphemy. Allah has verily said, 'The Most Gracious is firmly established on the Throne [20:5], and His Throne is above the seven heavens." Al-Balkhī then asked, "What if he says that Allah is established on His Throne but he says that he does not know if the Throne is up above or on earth." Abū Ḥanīfah answered, "He is a disbeliever because he denied that He is up above (*fī as-samā*). Whoever denies that He is in Heaven has committed blasphemy." Another version adds, "This is so because Allah is in the highest of high places (*'alā 'illiyīn*), and He is supplicated up to Him and not down."[308]

One should not pay attention to those who claim to follow Abū Ḥanīfah but deny Allah's transcendence. Some of the Mu'tazilah and others claimed to follow his school even though they had opposing beliefs. Similarly, many people claim to follow Mālik, Ash-Shāfi'ī and Ahmad, whereas they oppose their views. It is common knowledge that Abū Yūsuf, the great disciple of Abū Ḥanīfah, asked Bishr Al-Marisī to recant his denial of Allah being on the Throne. Many people, including Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Ḥātim, have narrated this incident.

Those who interpret the word "above" (*fawq*) in the *ḥadīth* and verses quoted earlier to mean that Allah is more perfect or superior than the beings He has created, or that He is greater than the Throne,

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[307]The *ḥadīth* does not occur in Aḥmad's *Musnad*. It was recorded by Ibn Mājah and others, as discussed earlier. It is a weak *ḥadīth*.

[308]See 'Alī Al-Qārī, *Sharḥ Fiqh al-Akbar*, p. 171; Adh-Dhahabī, *Al-'Ulū*, p. 103.

by comparing those texts with statements like, "as the Ruler is above (*fawq*) the Minister" or "the dinar is greater than the dirham" are making claims that are senseless. A sound heart and mind rejects such interpretations. To say that Allah is better than man, or greater than the Throne is just like saying that ice is cold or fire is hot, that the sun is brighter than a lamp, the sky is higher than the roof, the mountain greater than the pebble, or the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is better than this or that Jew, or the sky is above the earth. These are not words of praise or glorification or accolades; they are some of the most common and insignificant statements one could make. How can the miraculous word of Allah - concerning which if mankind and jinns worked together they could not produce something similar to it - be compared with such statements (by interpreting them in such a fashion)? In fact, by doing so, one is only degrading Allah's words.

As the proverb states, "If you say that the sword is sharper than the stick, you only disgrace the sword." Similarly, if someone says that a pearl is more precious than the skin of an onion or the scale of a fish, people will laugh at him for such statements, as the difference between the two being compared is so great that there is no need to mention their comparison. Obviously, the difference between the Creator and the created is much, much greater than that. Hence, it is senseless to say that Allah is greater than the Throne, unless there is some compelling need to do so to refute an argument. For example, Joseph said to his companions in prison, "Are many lords differing among themselves better or the one God, Supreme and Irresistible?" [12:39]. Allah also said, "Who is better, Allah, or the false gods they associate (with Him)?" [22:59]; and, "Allah is best and most abiding" [20:73].

That Allah is above (*fawq*) the world needs not to be separately established. Once it is proven that He transcends the world, it is proven that He is above it. His transcendence is absolute and unqualified. He transcends in the sense that He has full control over all the beings of the world and also with respect to His essence He is transcendent. If anyone affirms one of these aspects of transcendence and denies the other, he degrades Allah.

Allah is above the world in every sense. One who understands it in the sense of status (*makānah*) and not of place (*makān*) should know that *makānah* is the feminine of *makān* just as *manzilah* (place) is the feminine of *manzil*. Both the words *makānah* and *manzilah* are used in social and moral contexts, as the words *makān* and *manzil* are used in a physical context. We say, "You have a *manzilah* (place of honor) in our heart," or "X has a higher place in our heart than Y." There is a transmitted saying which states, "If

you want to know what *manzilah* you have in the eyes of Allah, you should look at the *manzilah* you give to Allah in your heart. For Allah places you in His heart where you place Him in your heart." the *manzilah* of Allah in one's heart refers to the knowledge, love and respect, and so on, which one has for Allah. Now when it is clear that *makānah* and *manzilah* are simply the feminines of *makān* and *manzil*, and the feminine always follows the masculine in word and meaning and is subject to it, then the dignity of an idea in the mind depends upon the dignity of the thing of which it is the idea. If the idea corresponds with reality, it is true; otherwise, it is false.

It has been said that the *'ulū* of Allah is a matter of the heart and means that He is above everything in the heart. That it is correct. But it is correct because the *'ulū* of Allah in the heart corresponds to His *'ulū* over everything in reality. Had He not been higher than everything by Himself, His eminence in the heart will not be real. It will have rather meant to regard something to be the highest whereas it is not the highest.

The spatial transcendence of Allah is proved not only by the transmitted texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah but it is also proven by reason and the original nature (*fiṭrah*) of man. As for the rational proof, first, it is obviously true that of two existing beings, either one will subsist in the other like an attribute or it will exist by itself separate from the other. Second, when Allah created the world, He either created it in Himself or external to Himself. The first alternative is false. Either people reject it by agreement or it necessarily implies that Allah is the locus of everything evil, nasty and dirty, from which He is obviously far exalted. The second alternative means that the world is outside the being of Allah. In that case, the world will exist separately from Allah, and will be different from Him. Obviously, it makes no sense to say that Allah is neither one with the world nor different from it. The third point is that the proposition that Allah is neither in the world nor outside it simply amounts to the negation of His existence. Again, this makes no sense: He exists either in the world or outside of it; there is no third possibility. Since the first is definitely ruled out, only the second is left, which is the truth.

As for the argument from the natural disposition (*fiṭrah*) of man, let us note that all human beings naturally and spontaneously raise their hands in prayer and look upwards when they beseech God. They consciously think of God as above them when they humble themselves to Him. Muḥammad Ibn Jābir Al-Maqdisī wrote that Sheikh Abū Ja'far Al-Hamadhānī once attended a lecture by Abū Al-Ma'ālī Al-Jūwaynī, commonly known as Imām al-Ḥaramayn, in

which he was discussing the concept of Allah's transcendence. He said, "Allah existed and there was no Throne. And He is exactly as He was at that time." Sheikh Abū Ja'far asked him, "Teacher, can you explain the feeling which we naturally have in our hearts? Whenever we say, 'O Allah!' we feel that we should look up. We look neither right nor left. How do you explain this feeling?" Hearing that, Abū Al-Ma'ālī hit his forehead with his hand and came down from the pulpit. Abū Ṭāhir wrote that he thought Abū Ja'far also stated that Abū Al-Ma'ālī burst into tears and said three times that Al-Ḥamadhānī had confounded and puzzled him. Abū Ja'far was pointing out that Allah has endowed the very nature of man with the truth that He is above the world; this is not something that needs to be learned. We feel in our hearts that when we pray to God, we should look upwards to Him.

People have objected to this argument and said that it is not a self-evident truth, and that many people have actually denied it. Had it been an a priorī truth, people would not have disputed it; it is nothing more than a hunch. A detailed answer to this objection has been given elsewhere. Here, suffice it to say that if reason has some ground to accept their view, it certainly has much more ground to accept ours; and if it rejects our view, it will reject their view to a greater extent. If our view is wrong in the judgment of reason, theirs is much more wrong. But if their view can be accepted by reason, then our view is much more acceptable to reason. Both of us claim that our view is self-evident and the other view is wrong.

If they claim that our view is a fiction, we may also accuse their view of being fallacious. However, most human beings who are not sophisticated – not from them or us – will agree with our view. And if the verdict of the majority is accepted, our view is more likely to be upheld than the view of our opponents. But if it is rejected, their view must also be rejected. They have based their view on premises which they claim are self-evident verdicts of human nature. But not only their view, but the whole structure of rational argument will then also fall to the ground. As for us, we at least have the revelation to the prophets of all ages on our side, which they do not have, while, at the same time, we possess rational arguments. Those people also sometimes claim that most rational beings are with them, but this is not true. Those who affirm the Creator of the world but say that He is not above the world, or that He is neither outside the world nor inside it, are only a small faction of rationalist thinkers. In Islam, no one ever expounded this view before Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān and his followers.

Some people reject this natural inclination and have said that hands are raised in supplications because the sky is the *qiblah* for supplications as the Ka'bah is the *qiblah* for prayer. This is not correct. We put our heads to the ground in prayer but the earth is not the *qiblah*. A number of points may be made in responding to this argument. First, none among the Elders has ever said that the sky is the *qiblah* for supplications. Furthermore, Allah has never revealed any statement that would support it. Since this is a religious matter, we cannot imagine that the Elders and scholars were not aware of it.

Second, the *qiblah* for supplications is the *qiblah* of the prayers. It is recommended to face the *qiblah* during supplications. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to face the *qiblah* on numerous occasions while supplicating.[309] Anyone who says that the *qiblah* for supplications is different from the *qiblah* of the prayer or that there are two *qiblah*s, one being the Ka'bah and the other the sky, is a heretic and is going against the Muslim community.

Third, the *qiblah* is what the worshiper faces. The Ka'bah is a *qiblah* because we face it in the prayers, in supplication, in remembering Allah (*dhikr*) and in offering sacrificial animals. We also turn the face of a dying person and of the dead in the grave towards it. This is why it is called *wijhah* or *istiqbāl* as opposed to *istidbār*. *Istiqbāl* means to turn one's face to something while *istidbār* means to turn one's back to something. Hence, what one points to with one's head, hands or side is not called *qiblah*, not even metaphorically. If Heaven were the *qiblah* of supplications, the supplicant should have turned his face towards it, but we have not been asked to do that. The direction in which hands are raised is never called *qiblah*, either literally or metaphorically. This is a religious tenet, but there is no scriptural evidence that states that the messengers were asked to face the sky while supplicating. In fact, they were forbidden to do so.

It is quite natural in prayer to concentrate one's mind and to beseech earnestly. This is done by both Muslims and non-Muslims, scholars and ignorant folk, particularly those who are caught in a difficult situation. It is also very natural for man, when in distress, to turn to God; this is something inherent in man. But the *qiblah* is something that can be subjected to abrogation and change, as the original *qiblah* was changed from Jerusalem to Makkah.[310] But looking up in supplication is something innate in man. One who

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[309] Al-Bukhārī, 3960; Muslim, 1794, 1763; At-Tirmidhī, 3081; 3172; Aḥmad, 1:30, 32, 6:133, 180, 259.

[310] Al-Bukhārī, 40, 399, 4486, 4492, 7252; Muslim, 526; At-Tirmidhī, 2966.

turns to the Ka'bah in prayer knows that Allah is not in the Ka'bah. But one who beseeches Allah and turns to his Lord and Creator hopes that His mercy will come down upon him from above.

This fact cannot be countered by pointing to the act of prostration. Whoever puts his head to the ground submits to One above him and humbles himself before Him; he never thinks that he is bowing down to One Who is below on the ground. Bishr Al-Marīsī is reported to have said, while in prostration, "Glory to my Lord, the Most Low." Exalted is Allah above this blasphemy. Whoever can go to this extent in denying Allah's *fawqīyyah* (being above the world) is very likely to turn into a disbelieving heretic (*zindīq*), if Allah's mercy does not redeem him. Such people are usually far away from righteousness. Allah has said, "We (too) will turn to confusion their hearts and their eyes, even as they refused to believe in the first instance" [6:110]; and, "When they went wrong, Allah let their hearts go astray" [61:5]. One who does not seek the truth from its signs is left to be doomed. May Allah save us and forgive us.

As for the author's words, "His creation is not able to encompass Him," this means that no one can encompass Him in knowledge, vision or any other manner of encompassing. He encompasses all while nothing encompasses Him.

(62) We say with faith, affirmation and submission that Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend and that He spoke directly to Moses.

Allah has Himself said, "Allah took Abraham for an intimate friend (*khalīl*)" [4:125]; and, "Allah spoke directly to Moses" [4:164]. *Khūllah*, from which comes the word *khalīl* (intimate friend), means complete love. The Jahmīyyah deny the possibility of love between Allah and man. They say that there can be no love unless the lover and the beloved have something common between them. Since there is nothing in common between the contingent and Allah, there can be no love between them. Similarly, they deny that Allah spoke to Moses, as we have already mentioned. The first to expound these ideas in Islam was Al-Ja'd Ibn Dirham. He began to preach these ideas in the first quarter of the second century after the Hijrah. The governor of Iraq and the Eastern Province of that time, Khālid Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Qasrī, called him to his court in Wasit. He then addressed the people on the day of 'Īd al-Aḍḥā and said, "People, perform the sacrifice and may Allah accept them. I am going to offer Al-Ja'd Ibn Dirham in sacrifice for he says that Allah

did not take Abraham as His friend nor did He speak to Moses." He then went down from the pulpit and killed Al-Ja'd. He acted on the advice of the jurists of his time from among the Successors.[311] May Allah reward him for what he did for Islam and the Muslims.

Al-Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān took the philosophy of Al-Ja'd, propagated, elaborated and defended it. The group known as the Jahmīyyah are named after him. He was killed by Salīm Ibn Ahwaz, the governor of Khurasan.[312] These ideas were passed on to the Mu'tazilah, the followers of 'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd. Their strength grew during the reign of Al-Mā'mūn. It reached the point where the leading scholars of the Muslims were persecuted and asked to agree with the ruling theology. The foundation of that thought is found with the polytheists and Sabaeans. They reject the notion that Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend or that He spoke to Moses. They said that because *khūllah* means complete love which overpowers the lover. In support of this suggestion, they quote the lines of a poet:

"You have permeated (*takhallalta*) me like the soul.
That it is why *khalīl* is called *khalīl*."[313]

But the love (*khūllah* and *muḥibbah*) which is attributed to Allah is what behooves Him as is the case with all His other attributes. The love that the verse speaks of is alluded to in a *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī from the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said, "If I were to take anyone from among the people of the earth for a *khalīl*, I would have taken Abū Bakr as a *khalīl*. But your companion (that is, the Prophet himself) is the *khalīl* of Allah."[314] Another version states, "I have no relationship to any *khalīl* (of this world). If I were to take a *khalīl* from the inhabitants of the earth, I would have taken Abū Bakr as a *khalīl*." In yet another version, the words are, "Allah has taken me as a *khalīl* as He had taken Abraham as a *khalīl*."[315] the Prophet (peace be upon

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[311]Abū Al-Haytham Khālid Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Zayd Al-Qasrī (d. 126/744) was the governor of Iraq during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph Hishām (105/725-125/743). For details concerning this event, see Ibn Athīr, *Al-Kamal* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1399/1979), 5:160; Ibn Taghrī, *An-Nujum az-Zahirah* (Cairo: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Misrīyyah, n.d.), 1:322.

[312]Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, 7:330.

[313]See Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Rawḍat al-Muḥibbīn wa Nuzhāt al-Mushtāqīn* (Aḥmad Ubayd, ed.; Cairo: Maṭba'at As-Sa'ādah, 1375/1956), pp. 47-49.

[314]Discussed earlier. Recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

[315]Also discussed earlier. Also authentic.

him) made it clear that it was not proper for him to have a *khalīl* from the people, but if that were possible, the person most deserving to be his *khalīl* would be Abū Bakr. At the same time, though, on different occasions, he stated that he loved certain people. For example, he said to Mu'ādh, "By Allah, I love you."[316] He made a similar statement to the Anṣār of Madinah. Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah and his son 'Usāmah were known to be beloved to the Prophet (peace be upon him). There are other examples of this nature. 'Amr Ibn Al-'Āṣ once asked the Prophet, "What person is most beloved to you?" He answered, "'Ā'ishah." He said, "From among the men?" He answered, "Her father."[317]

It is clear from these *aḥādīth* that *khūllah* is a special kind of love. Its object is loved for its own sake and not for any other external reason. Obviously, what is loved for some external reason falls short of that which is loved solely for itself. Since *khūllah* is the most perfect love and permeates the whole being of the lover, it cannot have more than one object. That it is why, when Allah took Abraham as a *khalīl*, and the latter prayed for a son, and Allah gave him Ismā'īl, and Ismā'īl began to attract the love of Abraham, Allah disliked it that someone else should take the place He had solely in his heart. He therefore tested Abraham. He asked him to sacrifice his son so that his *khūllah* would be established over his love for his son. Abraham submitted to Allah and was ready to carry out His command. When he intended to slaughter his son, his *khūllah* for Allah was proved, and its supremacy over the love for his son was established. At that moment, Allah rescinded His command, and Abraham offered a great animal for sacrifice as ransom for his son. What Allah had required from Abraham was absolute submission to His command. When this was proved, killing the son ceased to be something good, consequently that command was withdrawn. From that time, animal sacrifice was instituted for his followers until the end of the world.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) shares the *khūllah* of Allah with Abraham, as was discussed before. He also shares with Moses the honor of Allah's direct speech; he was given that honor when he was taken for the journey by night, known as the *isra'*. Those *aḥādīth* were discussed earlier.

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[316]Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1522; Aḥmad, 5:245, 247; An-Nasā'ī, 3:53; Ibn Ḥibban, 2345; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:273. It is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

[317]Al-Bukhārī, 3622, 4358; Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2384; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3885; Aḥmad, 4:203.

Here comes a famous question. If Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is considered superior to Abraham, how is that we ask for blessings upon the Prophet in a manner similar to those that were bestowed upon Abraham (in the prayer)? the one whom you are asking to be similar must be superior to the one who is seeking to be similar to him. How can these two contradictory facts be reconciled? Scholars have given many different answers to that question but space does not allow a detailed response.

One of the best answers is that "the family of Abraham" includes prophets but the family of Muḥammad does not have anyone else who was a prophet. If someone seeks blessings for the Prophet and his family similar to those that were conferred upon Abraham and his family, which included prophets, the family of Muḥammad will be granted what was given to them, for among them there are none who reach the level of the prophets. What is left is only that additional portion that is for the prophets and, therefore, they have some distinctions that are not found in anyone else.

An even better response is that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is from the family of Abraham. In fact, he is the best of the family of Abraham. Therefore, when we say, "as you blessed the family of Abraham", this reaches the Prophet and all the other prophets who were descendants of Abraham. Furthermore, it reaches Abraham himself. Allah says, "Lo! Allah preferred Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imrān above (all His creatures)" [3:33], and included in the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imrān are Abraham and 'Imrān themselves. In another verse, Allah says, "save the family of Lot, whom We rescued in the last watch of the night," and here the family of Lot includes Lot himself. Finally, Allah says, "And (remember) when We did deliver from Pharaoh's folk" [2:49], and "cause Pharaoh's folk to enter the most awful doom" [40:46], and these verses include Pharaoh as part of Pharaoh's folk.

Therefore – and Allah knows best – most of the narrations on the prayer upon the Prophet state either, "as You blessed the family of Abraham" or, as many state, "as You blessed Abraham." It is rarely narrated, "as You blessed Abraham and the family of Abraham."[318] This is because – and Allah knows best – "as you blessed Abraham" obviously includes his family and "as you blessed the family of Abraham" obviously includes Abraham himself. Similarly, when Abū Awfā brought his alms to the Prophet

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[318]It is narrated in this manner in the *ḥadīth* of Abū Sā'īd Al-Khudrī in Al-Bukhārī, 4798, 6358; in the *ḥadīth* of Ka'b Ibn 'Ujrah in Aḥmad, 4:244; and elsewhere.

(peace be upon him), the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed for him, saying, "O Allah, bestow blessings upon the family of Abū Awfā."[319] As for those who say, "as You blessed Abraham and the family of Abraham," Abraham is not included among the family since he was explicitly mentioned separately.

Since the household of Abraham was the most honored household in the world, in general, Allah blessed them with special characteristics, which include the following. Prophethood and scripture were to be found in his family. After the time of Abraham, all the prophets were from his descendants. Second, Allah made them leaders who guide by Allah's command until the Day of Judgment. Everyone who enters Paradise of Allah's devoted servants after the time of Abraham, enter it by following his path and call. Third, Allah chose for Himself two *khalīl*s from this family, as was already mentioned. Fourth, Allah made the members of this family leaders for the people. Allah says, "Lo! I have appointed you a leader for mankind. (Abraham) said: 'And of my offspring (will there be leaders)?' He said: My covenant includes not wrongdoers" [2:124]. Fifth, it was by his hands that the House, which stands as a place of prayer, a place of safety, direction of prayer and a place of pilgrimage, was erected. It is as if that House, having been erected by that family, was bestowing two acts of honor. Sixth, Allah commanded His servants to pray for the members of that household. And there are other ways by which Abraham was given special blessings.

(63) We believe in the angels, the prophets and the books that were sent down to the messengers. We bear witness that they were all following the path of manifest truth.

These are some of the pillars of faith. Allah says, "The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith: each one of them believes in Allah, His angels, His books and His messengers" [2:285]. He also says, "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah, and the Last Day, the angels, and the Book and the prophets" [2:177].

Allah has made faith to mean faith in all those matters. Allah calls those who believe in all of those aspects Believers. Allah

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[319]Al-Bukhārī, 1497, 4166, 6332, 6359; Muslim, 1078; Abū Dāwūd, 1590; An-Nasā'ī, 5:31; Ibn Mājah, 1796.

describes those who disbelieve in those as disbelievers. Allah has said, "Anyone who denies Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers and the Day of Judgment has gone far, far astray" [4:13]. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated, in a *ḥadīth* recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim known as the *ḥadīth* of the Angel Gabriel, in which Gabriel asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about *īmān* (faith), "Faith is that you believe in Allah, His Angels, His books, His messengers and the Last Day, and that things, good and bad, are fore-ordained by Allah."[320]

These fundamental aspects of faith are matters agreed upon by all the prophets and messengers (peace be upon them all). No people truly believe in these principles except those who follow the messengers.

Philosophers and heretics who oppose the prophets deny these truths in different ways. Philosophers, so-called "wise men", are the worst enemies. Anyone who is aware of the reality of what they say knows that they actually do not believe in Allah, nor His messengers, nor His books, nor His angels, nor the Day of Judgment. Their thought is that Allah is only an existence without an essence, that He does not know particulars, though everything that exists in reality is a particular being. They also believe that He does not do things with His power and will, and that the world proceeds from Him of necessity from eternity to eternity. If they say that the world is something made by Him, they say so only because they want to live in peace with the Believers. The truth is that the world for them is neither made nor created nor done by Allah. They also deny His other attributes, such as hearing, seeing, and so on. That is their belief in Allah

As for Allah's revealed books, in their opinion they are not the speech of Allah. For them He neither speaks to anybody or ever speaks a word. He has never said anything, nor will He speak in the future. The Qur'ān, they say, has descended from the Active Intellect upon the heart of a pure and intelligent person distinguished from other people by three characteristics: a sharp mind capable of comprehending things better than others; a strong will that can manipulate material things and change one form to another; and a powerful imagination that can present ideal powers in sensible forms, which is their understanding of the angels. They do not believe angels to be independent beings existing in reality, ascending and descending, moving from one place to another, or appearing to

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[320]Discussed earlier, recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

prophets and talking to them. For them, they are only mental realities having no real existence in the outer world.

As for the Last Day, they vehemently deny it. They do not believe that the world will disintegrate, the heavens will shatter and fall, the stars will fade, the sun and moon will be rolled up, or that men will be raised from their graves and taken to Paradise or Hell. All this is imagery for them which has been stated for the consumption of the common folk. They describe nothing real and certainly do not refer to what the followers of the prophets believe. This is the faith of this wretched and hateful people regarding Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers and the Last Day – the five fundamental of Islam.

The Mu'tazilah replace the five fundamental aspects of belief in Islam with their own five fundamental premises, and by doing so, destroy much of the religion. They base their faith on the concept of body and incident, which they call subject and attribute. From these attributes, or incidents, they derive the contingency of their subjects, the bodies. In the same way, they expound the concepts of *tawḥīd* and negate divine attributes, which they equate with the attributes of a body. They misinterpreted Allah's acts and His fore-ordainment and call their new concept justice (*'adl*). Then they developed their concept of prophethood and law, commands and prohibitions, promises and threats. They believe that one who commits a major sin is in a state intermediate between faith and not having faith, and that the punishment which has been promised in the Hereafter will be carried out without fail. They further believe that these ideas should be preached to the people, and that they must be asked to believe in them. This is their concept of enjoining good and eradicating evil. On the basis of this injunction, they justify armed revolt against rulers. These are, in short, their five fundamental principles, which they put in place of the five principles of faith expounded by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).

The later Rafiḍah determined the basic premises to be four: unity of Allah (*tawḥīd*), justice (*'adl*), prophecy (*nubūwwah*) and *imāmah* (belief in the imams).

The principles of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah are the same as what the Messenger expounded, since faith is essentially in what he taught. We elaborated this point earlier. The last two verses of Sūrat Al-Baqarah state these principles succinctly. That it is why these two verses are of eminent distinction. In Al-Bukhārī and Muslim it is recorded from Abū Man'ud 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmr that the

Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever reads the last two verses of Sūrat Al-Baqarah at night, they will suffice for him."[321]

Muslim recorded from Ibn 'Abbās, who said, "Gabriel was once sitting with the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he heard the sound of something breathing above his head. He raised his head and said, 'That is the sound of a door in the sky that has been opened today for the first time. An angel has come down from it who has never come down before.' The angel greeted them and said, 'I bear glad tidings. You are given two lights which have not been given to any prophet before you. They are the Opening Chapter (Al-Fatihah) of the Qur'ān and the last two verses of Sūrat Al-Baqarah. You will not recite a word from them that will not be granted to you.'"[322]

Abū Ṭālib Al-Makkī said that the principles of faith are seven, meaning the five mentioned in those two verses, and belief in Allah's fore-ordainment and belief in Paradise and Hell. That is correct. They are proven by clear and authentic texts. We cited them in the discussion of Allah's unity and prophecy in the earlier sections.

As for the angels, they have been assigned to various jobs taking care of the heavens and the earth. In fact, every movement in the world is made by them. Allah says, "They arrange to do the commands (of their Lord)" [79:5], and "distribute (blessings) by command" [51:5]. The reference in these verses is to the angels, according to the people of faith and the followers of the messengers. Those who actually disbelieve in the messengers and deny the Creator say that they refer to the stars.

The Qur'ān and the Sunnah point to different groups of angels who have been deputed to various things: mountains, clouds, rain, ovaries of the mothers to see that the fetus develops properly, to men and women in order to observe and record whatever they do, to the dead in the grave to ask them about religion, to the heavens to move them, to the sun and moon, to fire in order to ignite it or punish the wicked and destroy their houses, to gardens in order to grow shrubbery, and so on.

The angels are the greatest of Allah's troops. They include (those referred to in the following verse:) "by the emissary angels (sent) one after another... and scatter things far and wide, then

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[321] Al-Bukhārī, 4008, 5008, 5009, 5040, 5051; Muslim, *Ṣalāt al-Musāfirīn*, 808; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1397; At-Tirmidhī, *Thawāb al-Qur'ān*, 2881; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1369; Aḥmad, 4:118, 121, 122.

[322] Muslim, *Ṣalāt al-Musāfirīn*, 806; An-Nasā'ī, *Iftitaḥ aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 2:138.

separate them from another, then spread abroad a message" [77:1-5]; "by the (angels) who tear out the souls (of the wicked) with violence; by those who glide along (on errands of mercy), then press forward as in a race, then arrange to do (the commands of their Lord)" [79:1-5]; "by those who arrange themselves in ranks, and are so strong in repelling (evil), and thus proclaim the message (of Allah)" [37:1-3].

In all these verses, the reference is not to individual angels but to their groups, parties and armies. Some of them sprinkle mercy, some inflict punishment, some bear the divine Throne, some are engaged in worshiping, praising and glorifying Allah only, and so on. No one knows how many kinds of angels there are except Allah.

The word *malak* (angel) means a messenger who is commanded to carry out the commands of his Sender. Angels, therefore, have no say in the command, which is completely at the will of Allah, the One, the Irresistible. Theirs is but to follow His command: "They speak not before He speaks, and they act (in all things) by His command. He knows what is before them and what is behind them. And they offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable, and they stand in awe and reverence of His (glory)" [21:27-28]. "They all revere their Lord, high above them, and they do all that they are commanded" [16:50].

They are honorable servants of Allah. Some of them fall into ranks, some sing His glory. Each of them knows his place, which he never transgresses. Each carries out, without fail, what he has been asked. The best among them are those who are in Allah's presence, who "are not too proud to serve Him, nor are they weary of His service; who celebrate His praise, night and day, and do not ever flag or pause" [21:19-20].

They are headed by three angels: Gabriel, Michael and Israfil. These three are entrusted with life. Gabriel brings the revelation, which is the life of the heart and souls. Michael takes care of the rain by which comes the life of the earth, plants and animals. Israfil is in charge of the blowing of the Trumpet which leads to the reviving of the dead.

Angels are thus Allah's messengers to His creatures, His ambassadors to His servants, who take His commands to various parts of the universe and who report to Him on what has happened. "The heavens seem to crack under their weight. And why shouldn't that be the case when there is not a place the size of four fingers in the universe which is not occupied by an angel worshiping His

Lord, standing, bowing and prostrating before Him."[323] Every day, seventy thousand of them enter into the Much-Frequented House (of Allah) and they never return to it.[324]

The Qur'ān is filled with mention of the angels, their categories and their grades. Sometimes Allah mentions them along with His name, their blessings along with His blessings, and their honor along with His Own honor. He has stated that they bear His Throne, that they are close to Him, that they revere Him, that they are revered beings in themselves, that they are noble, pure, powerful and sincere. For example, "Each one (of them) believes in Allah, His angels, His books and His messengers" [2:285]; "There is no god but He: that is the witness of Allah, His angels, and those imbued with knowledge, standing firm on justice" [3:18]; "He it is Who sends blessings on you, as do His angels, that He may bring you out from the depths of darkness into light" [33:43]; "Those who sustain the Throne (of Allah) and those around it sing glory and praise to their Lord; believe in Him; and implore forgiveness for those who believe" [40:7]; "And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne on all sides, singing glory and praise to their Lord" [39:75]; "But they are servants raised in honor" [21:26]; "Those who are near to your Lord disdain not to do Him worship; they celebrate His praises; and bow down before Him" [7:206]; "But if the disbelievers are arrogant, no matter; for in the presence of your Lord are those who celebrate His praises by night and by day. And they never flag" [41:38]; "(They) are kind and honorable" [82:11]; "(They are) honorable, pious and just" [80:16]; "To it bear witness those nearest (to Allah)" [83:22]; and, "They do not strain their ears in the direction of the Exalted Assembly" [37:8] the *aḥādīth*, too, mention them often. Therefore, belief in the angels is one of the five basic foundations that form the pillars of faith.

People have debated the question as to who is superior, angels or human beings who are pious. It is said that the Ahl as-Sunnah believe that pious men, or at least the prophets among them, are superior to the angels. The Mu'tazilah, on the contrary, believe in the superiority of the angels. As for the Ash'arīs, some have no opinion on this issue and others are inclined to believe in the superiority of the angels. This opinion is also held by a group of the Ahl as-Sunnah and the Ṣūfīs. Shī'ī scholars say that all the *imāms* are superior to the angels, and have exalted some categories of men

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[323]This is found in a *ḥadīth* in At-Tirmidhī, 2313; Ibn Mājah, 4190; Aḥmad, 5:173. Its chain is weak but it is supported by corroborating narrations.

[324]Part of a long *ḥadīth* on intercession recorded in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

over some categories of angels, and vice-versa. However, no one worth mention has said that the angels are superior to some prophets rather than others.

I was very reluctant to discuss this issue, for it does not avail much and is quite insignificant. It approximates those things that one is not concerned with. "From the best Islam is for a person to leave those things that do not concern him."[325]

Moreover, the Sheikh (Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī) has not touched upon it, either negatively or positively. Probably he deliberately refrained from entering into discussion of it. That work mentions the questions that Abū Ḥanīfah did not respond to, among which is the question of whether the angels or the prophets are superior.

Our duty is only to believe in the angels and the prophets. We are not required to believe that one of them is superior to the other. Had it been a duty, there would have been some text to guide us on this issue. Allah has stated, "This day I have perfected (and completed) for you your religion" [5:3], and "And your Lord is never forgetful" [19:64].

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it states, "Allah has obligated the obligations, so do not neglect them. He has set the boundaries, so do not go beyond them. He has prohibited some things, so do not violate them. About some things He has been silent out of compassion for you, not out of forgetfulness, so do not seek after them."[326] It is best not to say anything about this matter, either affirming or denying any position.

One cannot say that this question is similar to others that are derived from the Book and the Sunnah, because therein the evidence is sufficient to give their signs, God willing. What has led me to discuss this topic is the statement of those ignorant and rude people that the angel is a servant to the Prophet or that some of the angels are servants of human beings, referring to the angels in charge of human beings, and other statements that go against Islam and are improper.

Claiming one species to be superior to another – if done out of bigotry and prejudice – is to be rejected. This question is similar to the question of the superiority of one prophet over another. On that question there is a clear text, which states, "Of those messengers,

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[325]Discussed earlier; iIt is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

[326]This *ḥadīth* is not in either of the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s, as the commentator implies. Instead, it was recorded by Ad-Dāraquṭnī 4:184, Al-Ḥakīm, 4115, and Al-Bayhaqī, 10:12, 13. The chain of this *ḥadīth* is weak. Some scholars declare the *ḥadīth ḥasan*, based on supporting evidence. Al-Albānī once did so and then later he discovered, as he stated, that he was wrong in doing so. Hence, he concludes that the *ḥadīth* is weak.

some of whom We have caused to excel others..." [2:253], and "And We preferred some of the prophets above others" [17:55]. We discussed that topic earlier while commenting on the author's words, "And the leader of the messengers," that is, the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The aspect to be considered is what is the strongest evidence and not what is the more famous statement just because some of the heretics agreed to it after the question was something that the Ahl as-Sunnah disagreed about. Abū Ḥanīfah originally stated that the angels were superior to human beings and then he took the opposite opinion. Apparently, one of his stances was also to refuse to give an opinion on this question.

The evidence on this question for both sides point to the virtue of each species and not the superiority of one over the other. About the virtue of each species there is no dispute.

Tāj ad-Dīn Al-Fazārī (may Allah have mercy on him) wrote a treatise entitled *Al-Ishārah fī al-Bashārah fī Tafḍīl al-Bashr 'alā al-Malak*. At the end of that treatise he wrote:

> Know that this question is one of the innovations of the theologians. It was not discussed in the early years of this nation nor by the great scholars who came afterwards. No principle of faith rests upon this question, nor is it related to many religious points. For that reason, many who wrote about faith did not discuss this question in their writings. Furthermore, a number of people specifically forbade discussing this issue. Every scholar who wrote on this topic had some weakness and confusion in their discussion of this point.

Among the proofs given for the prophets' superiority over the angels is that Allah commanded the angels to bow down to Adam. This is evidence that he was superior to them. For that reason, Iblīs refused and became proud, saying, "Do you see this creature which You have honored over me?" [17:62]

The others reply that the angels' prostrating to Adam was in obedience to a command from their Lord; it was worship and submission to Him and an act of honor and respect for Adam. But this does not necessarily mean that Adam was superior, in the same way that Jacob's prostrating to his son Joseph does not necessarily mean that Joseph was superior to him or that the Ka'bah is superior to people because they bow down toward it in fulfilling the command of their Lord.

As for Iblīs' refusal to bow down, he was pitting his own opinion and false analogy against the command by saying that he

was better than Adam. That is the minor or first premise. The major premise is not stated but is only implied. The major premise is that a superior being will not bow down to an inferior being. Both of these premises are false. As for the first premise, clay is superior to fire in many of its attributes. Therefore, Iblīs' constitution deceived him and he became proud and refused to bow down. Among the attributes of fire is the desire for superiority and being inconstant, fickle and volatile. Furthermore, it ruins everything that touches it with destruction and burning. But Adam's element helped him in repentance, calmness, submission and obedience to the command of Allah. He admitted his sin and sought forgiveness. Among the attributes of clay are constancy, calmness, composure, humility, submission, fear and humility. Whatever comes into contact with it grows and develops and is blessed. This is the opposite of fire.

As for the second premise, that a superior will not bow down to an inferior, this is also false. Prostration is an act of obedience to Allah and a fulfillment of His command. If Allah commanded His servants to bow down to a rock, it will be obligatory upon them to hurry and fulfill that command. But that is not evidence that what is being bowed down to is superior to the one prostrating, although there might be an aspect of honor and respect, in which case it is evidence that the object being bowed down to is virtuous. These people also argue that Iblīs' words, "Do you see this creature which You have honored over me" [17:62], could have been uttered after he was thrown out of Paradise for refusing to bow down to Adam and not before. If that is the case, it cannot be used as evidence on this question.

Another argument presented is that the angels have minds but they do not have desires, while the prophets have both minds and desires. Since they prevent themselves from following their own desires and going after those things they are naturally inclined to, they must be superior. The others respond by saying that perhaps the angels achieve, through their constant obedience, worship and constancy in such acts, what the prophets achieve through the denial of their desires. At the same time, the length of time that the angels worship Allah is much greater.

Another argument is that Allah has made the angels messengers to the prophets, emissaries between Him and them. But this argument can be used by those who say the angels are superior, and in fact, it is a stronger proof for them. In that case the argument is that the prophets are messengers and they are superior to those they are sent to by virtue of their message. Therefore, the angels who are messengers to them are superior to them as the messenger angel is a messenger to the human messenger.

(Those who consider the prophets superior) quote Allah's words, "And He taught Adam all the names..." [2:31] (as evidence of his superiority over the angels). The others reply that this is evidence of his excellence but not of his superiority. Neither Adam nor the angels knew anything except what Allah had taught them. Khidr was not superior to Moses because of the knowledge that he possessed that Moses did not. Moses and his servant went out in search of knowledge by going to Khidr. Moses clearly sought knowledge from him. Khidr told him, "You are following some knowledge from Allah..." Similarly, Hudhud was not superior to Solomon because of the knowledge that he had that Solomon did not have.

Another argument is the verse, "What prevents you from bowing down before that which I created with My hands?" [38:75]. The others reply again by stating that this is a proof of his excellence, not his superiority. Otherwise, one must say that Adam is also superior to Muḥammad (peace be upon both of them). If you say, "He is one of his progeny," then his progeny includes both pious and impious people. In fact, on the Day of Judgment, when it is said to Adam, "Send those of your descendants to the Hell-fire," nine hundred ninety-nine out of every one thousand will go to Hell and one will go to Paradise.[327] What is the use of that superiority that leads to only one of one thousand being saved.

Another argument is the statement of 'Abdullah Ibn Salam, "Allah never created a creature more honorable to Him than Muḥammad..."[328] the first question about this is whether it is an authentic statement from him. The second question is whether it is a correct statement, as it is possible that it is something derived from the books of the Jews and Christians.

There is also the *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "The angels said, 'O our Lord, you gave the humans the world to eat, drink and wear clothing in, and we glorify Your praises and we do not eat, drink or play. Therefore, as you gave them this world, make the Hereafter for us.' He said, 'I will not treat the righteous descendants of the one I created with My hands the same as the one to which I said, "Be," and it was.''" This was recorded by Aṭ-Ṭabarānī.[329]

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[327]This is part of a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī and recorded in Al-Bukhārī (3348; 4741, 6530, 7483) and Muslim (222).

[328]Al-Bayhaqī, Dalā'il an-Nūbuwwah, 5:485-486; Al-Ḥakīm, 4:568-569.

[329]Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr* and *Al-Awsaṭ*. In both of these *aḥadīth*'s chains there are narrators who are considered liars.

'Abdullah Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥanbal recorded from 'Urwah Ibn Ruwaym, who said that an Anṣārī narrated to him from the Prophet (peace be upon him), "The angels said..." That narration includes, "...they sleep and rest. Allah says, 'No (I will not do what you ask. They make the same request three times and after each time Allah says, 'No.'"'[330]

The first problem with this argument is the authenticity of these *aḥādīth*. There is some discussion concerning their chains and some question concerning their texts. How can one think of the angels repeatedly asking such a thing of Allah! Allah has stated about the angels, "They speak not until He has spoken, and they act by His command" [21:27]. Can anyone conceive of them being in their state and actually longing for the desires of humans? Sleep is the brother of death; how could they be envious about it? How could they be envious about wasted pastimes (lahu) when they are a type of falsehood?

The others argue that the situation is the opposite. It was Iblīs who was able to whisper to Adam and deceive him with his desire to be an angel, as is stated in the Qur'ān, "Your Lord forbade you this tree only, lest you should become angels or become of the immortals" [7:20]. This shows that the superiority of the angels is something ingrained in the nature of man. This is supported by Allah's statement, quoting the women who cut their wrists upon seeing Joseph, "Allah Blameless! This is not a human being. This is none other than some gracious angel" [12:31].

Allah also says, "Say (Muḥammad, to the disbelievers): I say not unto you (that) I possess the treasures of Allah, nor that I have knowledge of the Unseen, and I say not unto you: I am an angel" [6:50]. The first group (who say that prophets are superior) state that this was when it was ingrained in him that the angels were a great and beautiful creation that were able to perform stupendous acts. This was especially true among the Arabs, who considered the angels great beings, to the point that they called the angels the daughters of Allah. Allah be exalted high above what they say.

Allah also says, "Lo! Allah preferred Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imrān above (all His creatures) (*'alamīn*)" [3:33]. The other group answers this by saying that the word *'alamīn* does not necessarily refer to all of His creatures. In fact, in different contexts it means different things.

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[330]Recorded by 'Abdullah Ibn Aḥmad, *Kitāb as-Sunnah*, 902; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, 316-317. Its chain is weak.

Note the following verses, "That he may be a warner to the peoples (*'alamīn*)" [25:1]; "They said: 'Have we not forbidden you to (entertain) anyone (*'alamīn*)" [15:70]; "What! Of all creatures (*'alamīn*) do you come unto males?" [26:165]; "And We chose them purposely above all creatures (*'alamīn*)" [44:32].

Another verse used as evidence is, "Lo! Those who believe and do good deeds, they are the best of created beings (*barīyyah*)" [98:7]. The word *barīyyah* comes from the word *bar'a* which means created being. This confirms that the righteous human is the best of creation. The others respond to this by saying that they become the best creation because they believe and do good deeds. The angels are even more befitting of this description; they do not tire or rest in their devotions. Therefore, this could not mean that human beings are better than the angels. This is in accordance with those who recite the word *bari'ah* with a *hamza*. As for the reading with *yā*, the *yā* could have been derived from the *hamza*, or it could be from the word *barā*, which is clay, as Al-Farā said, according to what Al-Juharī narrated from him in *Aṣ-Ṣiḥaḥ*. In that case, the meaning is that the pious are the best creation created from clay. Therefore, this statement does not apply to those who were not created from clay.

The people of the first group say that when they talk about the superiority of pious human beings they are talking about them when they reach perfection, reach their goal and the end of their striving, when they enter Paradise and achieve the closeness to Allah, live in the highest ranks, and they increase their love of Allah by getting closer to Him, His appearing to them and their being able to look upon His noble face. The others reply that the question here is whether they only reach that stage, being above the angels, or they are equal in that. If it is confirmed that they will be in ranks above the angels, then the claim is acceptable, otherwise the argument is not acceptable.

From the proofs that the angels are superior to humans is the Qur'ānic verse, "The Messiah will never scorn to be a servant unto Allah; nor will the favored angels" [4:172]. It is confirmed from a semantic point of view that a sentence like that demonstrates the superiority of the coupled word over the antecedent. For example, it is not acceptable to say, "The minister will not scorn to be a servant of the King, nor will the soldier or guard." Instead, one ought to say, "The soldier does not scorn to be a servant of the King, nor does the minister." In that way, you precede from the lesser to the greater. Therefore, if it is confirmed that the angels are superior to Jesus, it is confirmed that they are superior to all others, as no one

says that they are better than some prophets and not better than others.

The others reply to this in many ways. The best of their replies – or one of their best – is that there is no dispute concerning the superiority of the strength, endurance and greatness of the angels in their worship, submission, humility and so on. Jesus does not scorn such an act, nor will one who has more ability or is of a stronger nature than he. This order of superiority in this manner does not necessarily imply superiority in all other manners.

Another verse quoted is, "Say (Muḥammad): I say not unto you that I possess the treasures of Allah, nor that I have knowledge of the Unseen; and I say not unto you: Lo! I am an angel" [6:50]. This implies that had he said such a thing he would be claiming to be something greater than he is, but he would never make such a claim. The others answer this by saying that the disbelievers were saying, "What ails this messenger that he eats food and walks in the markets?" [25:7], wherefore he was commanded to tell them that he was a human being like them who was in need of what human beings need concerning earning of livelihood, food and drink, and that he was not one of the angels that Allah has made with no need for food or drink. Therefore, this does not necessarily imply a general kind of superiority.

From the *ḥadīth*, Muslim recorded from Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "The strong Believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak Believer, but in both of them there is goodness."[331] It is well known that the strength of a human does not come anywhere near the strength of an angel. The others reply by saying that the apparent meaning of the *ḥadīth* is in reference to humans – Allah knows best – and does not in general include angels.

There is another *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Abū Hurayrah, in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, from among the things he narrated from his Lord, "Allah said, I am as My servant thinks I am. I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself. If he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an assembly better than it..."[332] This is a clear text concerning superiority. The others state that it could imply better for the one who is remembering Him and not better in a general sense.

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[331] Muslim, 2664; Ibn Mājah, 79, 4168; Aḥmad, 2:366, 370.

[332] Al-Bukhārī, 7405, 7505, 7537; Muslim, 2675.

Ibn Khuzaymah recorded from Anas that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "When I was sitting the angel Gabriel came. He struck me between my shoulders. I stood next to a tree like a bird's nest. I sat on one of them (one of the branches) and he sat on the other. The tree rose until it blocked the horizons. I looked around. If I wished to touch the sky, I would have been able to touch it. I looked to Gabriel and found him sitting calmly, without any movement. Then I knew his superiority over me with respect to his knowledge of Allah."[333] The others answer by saying that there is some question about the chain of this *ḥadīth* and therefore, it cannot be used as evidence until it is confirmed.

In short, this is an unimportant issue and that is why most of the writers on the subject of creed have not discussed it; and Abū Ḥanīfah kept silent concerning it, as we have said before. Allah knows best what is correct. As for the prophets and messengers, we must believe in all those whom Allah has mentioned in His book. We must also believe that He has sent many other prophets and messengers whom He did not mention. Their names and number are known only to Allah.

We must believe in them as a whole because there is no text that states their exact number. Allah says, "Of some messengers we have already told you; of others We have not" [4:164], and "We did aforetime send messengers before you. Of them, there are some whose story We have related to you, and some whose story We have not related to you" [40:78].

We must also believe that they conveyed to their peoples whatever message they were given by Allah and asked to convey, that they explained it fully and left no excuse for anyone, and that no one has the authority to oppose them. Allah says, "Are the messengers charged with aught save plain conveyance (of the message)?" [16:35]; "But if they turn away, your duty is only to preach (the message) clearly" [16:82]; "If you obey him, you will be on right guidance. The Messenger's duty is only to preach (the message) clearly" [24:54]; and "So obey the Messenger, but if you turn back, the duty of our messenger is but to proclaim the message clearly and openly" [64:12].

Among the messengers there are those who are said to be of "resolute purpose" or "absolute resolve" (*'ulū al-'azm*). People have different views about this topic.[334] The best view I know of is what

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[333]Recorded by Ibn Khūzaymah in *At-Tawḥīd*, pp. 209-210. It is a weak *ḥadīth*.

[334]Ibn Al-Jawzī has noted ten different views on the subject as to who are the

Al-Baghawī reports from Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah that they are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad (may the peace and blessings be upon all of them). They have been mentioned in the verse, "And remember We took from the prophets their covenant as We did from you, from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, the son of Mary" [33:7]; and, "The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah – which We have sent by inspiration to you and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses and Jesus: namely that you should remain steadfast in religion, and make no divisions therein" [42:13].

As for Muḥammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, we should believe in him and follow whatever rules (Shari'ah) he has given, following it and believing in it, both in general and in particular aspects.

We believe in all the books that have been given to the messengers, both those that Allah has mentioned in His Book, such as the Torah, the Gospel and the Psalms, and those that He has sent to the prophets but has not mentioned their names. Their names and number are known only to God.

As for the Qur'ān, we must believe in it as well as carry out its commands. This is an additional obligation which we do not owe to the other books. In short, we must believe that the books given to the prophets were revealed to them by Allah, that they contain the truth and guidance, and that they are perspicuous and illuminating, and that they heal (the diseases of the heart).

Allah has made all these points in the following verses: "Say: We believe in Allah and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) the prophets from their Lord. We make no difference between one and another of them, and we submit to Allah completely" [2:136]. "Allah: there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. It is He Who sent down to you (step by step) in truth the Book confirming what went before it, and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel before this as a guide for mankind, and He sent down the Criterion (*al-furqān*)" [3:2-3]; "The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him" [2:285]; and, "Do they not consider the Qur'ān (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy" [4:82].

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messengers of resolute purpose (see his commentary, *Zādal-Maṣir*, op. cit., vol. 7, pp. 392-393). One of these views is that all the messengers have been of resolute purpose, and the qualification is defining not restrictive.

There are many more verses like these, which clearly state that they are Allah's words, and that He has revealed them. They also confirm His attributes of speech and transcendence. He has said, "Mankind was one single nation, and Allah sent messengers with glad tidings and warnings, and sent with them the Book with the truth" [2:213]; "And indeed it is a Book of exalted power. No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it. It is sent down by One full of Wisdom, Worthy of all praise" [4:42]; "And those to whom knowledge has come see that the (Revelation) sent down to you from your Lord is the Truth" [34:6]; "Mankind! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts, and for those who believe, a guidance and a mercy" [10:57]; "Say: It is a guide and a healing to those who believe" [41:44]; "Believe, therefore, in God and His Messenger, and in the Light which We have sent down" [64:8]; and so on.

(64) As for all those who face our *qiblah* (*ahl qiblatinā*), we call them *muslim* and *mu'min*, so long as they profess what the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught, and believe in whatever he said or enjoined.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said, "Whoever prays as we pray, facing our *qiblah*, and eats of the meat of the animals that we slaughter, is Muslim. He has the same rights and the same duties as we have."[335] The words of the author suggest that *islām* and *imān* are one, that a Muslim does not go out of the bounds of Islam when he commits a sin unless he believes it to be lawful.

By *ahl qiblatinā* the author means everyone who professes Islam, faces the Ka'bah (in prayer), even if he entertains wrong ideas or indulges in sinful acts, unless he denies what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought. We will return to this point later when commenting on the author's words, "We do not call anyone who faces our *qiblah* infidel (*kāfir*) on account of any sin, unless he holds it to be lawful," as well as on his words, "*Islām* and *īmān* (faith) are one, and *muslim* and *mū'min* (Believers) are in essence the same."

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[335] Al-Bukhārī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 391; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Īmān*, 8:109.

(65) We neither enter into vain talk about Allah nor do we dispute obstinately on the matters of His religion.

This is a reproof to the theologians and their rejected theology. They probe into matters concerning Allah without any knowledge or authority from Him. "They follow nothing but their desires and conjectures, even though there has already come to them guidance from their Lord" [53:23].

Abū Ḥanīfah said, "No one should say about the Essence of God, except what He has said of Himself." Another scholar has said that Allah says, "Whomsoever I like to observe the duties towards My names and attributes I make humble and reverent. But whomsoever I expose to the reality of My essence I annihilate. You may, therefore, choose whichever you like: reverence or annihilation." What happened at Mount Sinaī proves the point. When Allah revealed Himself to the mountain, it was shattered and leveled to the ground. It could not stand the majesty of the divine Essence. Ash-Shiblī has said, "To be free in talking about God is to be disrespectful."

The words, "We do not dispute obstinately in the matters of His religion," mean that we do not dispute with the people of truth (*ahl al-ḥaqq*), or raise doubts and objections as heretics do. We do not want them to enter into useless controversy (*mirā'*) and deviate from the truth. *Mirā'* is to call to error, hide the truth, and undermine Islam.

(66) We do not dispute about the Qur'ān. We bear witness that it is the speech of the Lord of the Worlds, which the faithful spirit brought down and communicated to Muḥammad, the leader of the messengers (may Allah's blessings be upon him and all of his family). It is the speech of Allah, the Most High, which no speech of any created being can match. We do not believe that it was created, and we avoid going against the belief of the Muslim community.

"We do not dispute about the Qur'ān." This may mean that we do not hold such erroneous ideas as the heretics hold and try to make them prevail over the truth. We instead believe that the Qur'ān is the "word of the Lord of the Worlds, which the faithful spirit revealed to Muḥammad..."

Or it can mean that we accept the readings of the Qur'ān without dispute, and affirm all its recitations which have been confirmed.

Both these meanings are correct. In support of the second, one may cite the *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn Mas'ūd. He said that he heard a man reciting a verse in a way different from what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had taught him. He caught hold of the man and brought him to the Prophet. When he related the story, the Prophet frowned upon what Ibn Mas'ūd had done, and said, "Both of you are correct. Do not quarrel over such differences. The people who were before you quarreled over such things and destroyed themselves." This *ḥadīth* has been recorded by Muslim.[336]

Here the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned against disputes in which every party denies the truth that is with his opponent. Since both recitations were correct, his warning meant that if they entered into a controversy they would ruin themselves as had the people who existed before them.

This is also the reason Ḥudhayfah urged 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with them), "Save this community from disputing about the Qur'ān. Save it from going the way earlier communities have gone in quarreling about their books."[337] 'Uthmān acted promptly and made the community agree on a single reading. The community is protected from agreeing on a thing which is wrong. Hence, if they agreed on a single text they did not give up anything that was necessary, nor committed anything that was forbidden. People were not obliged to recite the Qur'ān in all the seven different ways (*aḥruf*); they were merely allowed to do so, which was in reality a concession from Allah. They were permitted to recite in any one of those modes they liked.

People were not asked to read *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān in a particular order, for no order was fixed by revelation. This is why the order of the *sūrahs* in the Qur'ān of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd was different from the order of the Qur'ān of 'Uthmān, or the Qur'ān of any other Companion. However, the order and arrangement of the verses in a particular *sūrah* was fixed by revelation and cannot be altered. In short, when the Companions saw that the *ummah* would quarrel and fight among themselves if they were not made to agree on a single text (*ḥarf wāḥid*), they gathered together one text. This is the view on this issue that has been commonly accepted by scholars and reciters of the Qur'ān among the Elders, Ibn Jarīr and others.

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[336]Contrary to the belief of the author, the *ḥadīth* is not mentioned by Muslim; rāther, it is recorded by Al-Bukhārī, 2410, 3476, 5062; and Aḥmad, 1:393, 412, 456.

[337]See the story related by Ibn Shihāb in Al-Bukhārī, 4987.

Others have said that in the beginning people were allowed to recite the Qur'ān in seven different ways, because if they had been asked to recite it in one way only, it would have put them in great difficulty.[338] Later on, when they became familiar with one recitation, found it easy and saw that it was better for them, they agreed on reciting the Qur'ān they way it was given to the Messenger by the Angel in the final recitation.

Some jurists and theologians have suggested that the 'Uthmānī text incorporated all the seven ways (*al-aḥrūf as-saba'*) of recitation, as it is not permissible to discard any of the seven modes or reading the Qur'ān.[339] They say that since the *ummah* agreed on it, leaving out all other recensions, it could not have dropped any one recitation. We answered this argument earlier. We said that people were not required but only allowed to recite in any of the seven ways, and that this permission was later withdrawn.

It has been claimed that 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd said that one could recite the Qur'ān in any way, provided the meaning was not affected. This is false. What he actually said was, "When I look at the various ways of recitation prevalent among the Companions, I find that they are very close to each other. It is just as you say *halumma*, *aqbil* or *ta'āl* when you ask someone to come to you. So recite the way you have learned."[340]

We have been asked not to dispute with the People of the Book except in the best way. The only people who have been excepted are wrongdoers. If this is the case, then how will we be allowed to quarrel with the people of our own *qiblah*! They are certainly better, in general, than the People of the Book. We should never argue with those among them who are righteous except in the best possible way. If any one of them commits wrong by mistake we are not to dub him an infidel unless we prove to him that he is guilty of a thing whose perpetrator was called infidel by the Prophet (peace be on him). Allah has forgiven the lapses which people of this *ummah* may commit by mistake or which they forget.[341] This is why the

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[338]Ibn Jarīr, *Jami' al-Bayān*, op.cit., 1: 56-59.

[339]See Ibn Hajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, op. cit., vol. 9, pp. 29-30. Ibn Hajar has written that Abū Shāmah Al-Maqdisī (d.665/1267) says that people differ on the question whether the Qur'ānic text incorporates all the seven modes (*aḥruf*) on which the Book was revealed or just one *ḥarf*. Ibn Al-Baqillānī believes in the former, and Aṭ-Ṭabarānī and others in the latter, and the latter is the commonly accepted view.

[340]*Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, op. cit., *ḥadīth* no. 48; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 8680.

[341]Ibn Mājah, 2045. But the isnād of the *ḥadīth* is broken (see Al-Buṣīrī, *Miṣbāḥ az-Zujājah fī Zawā'id Ibn Mājah*, ed. Mūsā Muḥammad 'All and Dr. 'Izzat Alī 'Aṭī'ah,

Elders condemned heretics but did not even consider taking up the sword against them except as a last resort. We will discuss this point later when we comment on the author's words, "We believe that truth and good are with unity and that untruth and evil are with dissension."

The words, "We believe that the Qur'ān is the speech of the Lord of the Worlds" need no comment. We have already discussed the point at length while commenting on the author's words, "The Qur'ān is the speech of Allah, originating from Him in a way that transcends description."

As for the words, "which the faithful spirit has brought down," they refer to the angel Gabriel, peace be upon him. Gabriel has been called a spirit because he carries to the prophets among mankind the revelation that gives them life. He is perfectly faithful and trustworthy. God has Himself attested to this fact: "With it came down the spirit of faith and truth to your heart that you may admonish in the perspicuous Arabic tongue" [26:193]; and, "Verily this is the word of a most honorable messenger, endued with power, with ranks before the Lord of the Throne, with authority there, and faithful to his trust" [81:19-20]. These verses are a description of Gabriel. They should not be confused with such verses as, "This is verily the word of an honorable messenger, it is not the word of a poet" [69:40-41]. Messenger here refers to Muḥammad, peace be upon him.

The words "and communicated to the leader of the messengers" clearly state the fact that Gabriel taught the Qur'ān to Muḥammad (peace be on him). This refutes the view which the Qaramatah and others hold that the Prophet articulated the Qur'ān in his mind under an inspiration.[342]

The words, "We do not believe that it was created, and we avoid going against the belief of the Muslim community," contain a reprimand for those who say that the Qur'ān was created and thereby oppose the Muslim community. The Elders of the *ummah* agreed that the Qur'ān is in reality the uncreated speech of Allah.

Cairo: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Ḥadīthah, n.d.). However with a complete isnād, the *ḥadīth* has been produced by Al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 7:356; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Mu'jam aṣ-Ṣaghīr* (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmīyyah, 1403/1983), 1:270; Ad-Dāraquṭnī, *Sunan* (ed. 'Abdullah Hāshim Yamānī, Madinah and Cairo: Dār Al-Mahasin, 1386/1966, henceforth referred to simply as Ad-Dāraquṭnī) 4:170-171; Ibn Ḥibban, 1498; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 2:198.

[342]For a discussion of this point see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Dār Ta'āruḍ al-'Aql wa an-Naql*, op. cit., 10:204-06.

The words, "We avoid going against the belief of the Muslim community," can also be taken in a general sense. They may mean that we do not oppose the Muslim community in any belief on which they agree, for to oppose them is to stray into error and heresy.

(67) We do not charge anyone of the *ahl al-qiblah* with being an infidel (*kāfir*) for committing a sin, unless he considers it to be lawful. Nor do we say that sin will not harm the sinner merely because he has faith.

The author has earlier clarified what he means by *ahl al-qiblah*. He said, "We call *ahl al-qiblah* all those Muslims and Believers who believe in all that the Prophet has taught, and testify that whatever he has said or enjoined is true." In the lines above he is countering the Khawārij, who excommunicate anyone due to any sin committed.

The issue of excommunication (*takfir*) or non-excommunication has led to a lot of controversy and even persecution. It has also led to a great deal of division. Opinions and desires have spread all over on this issue. Different groups have stated different views and advanced arguments in their support. In general, they have either taken extreme or moderate positions about those who hold ideas and beliefs that are opposed in reality or in their judgment to the truth Allah has revealed to His Prophet, as well as about those who are guilty of grave sins.

One group does not excommunicate anyone of the *ahl al-qiblah* and denounces excommunication altogether, even though they are aware that within the fold of the community there are hypocrites who are greater infidels than the Jews and the Christians in the eyes of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the Consensus, and there are those who express their hypocrisy whenever they get a suitable opportunity, in spite of professing Islam outwardly.

However, there is no difference in the *ummah* on the issue that if anyone openly refuses to acknowledge things that are clearly and definitively known (*zāhīr wa mutawātir*) to be obligatory or forbidden, he will be asked to recant. If he recants, he will be left alone; otherwise, he will be declared an apostate and infidel, and be killed. Hypocrisy and apostasy often result from heretical ideas and evil practices. Al-Khallal noted in his *Kitāb as-Sunnah* a statement by Muḥammad Ibn Sirīn, reported through proper channels, that those who most readily turn apostate are those who have erroneous ideas and beliefs. Ibn Sirīn thinks that it was in the case of such people that the verse, "When you see men engaged in vain discourse

about Our signs, turn away from them unless they turn to a different theme," [6:68] was revealed.

This is why a number of leading scholars of religion refrain from saying that they do not excommunicate for a sin. They rather prefer to say that they do not excommunicate for every sin, as the Khawārij do. These are two different positions. The second is, in fact, a rejection of the Khārijī position, which pronounces excommunication for all sins.

That is why the author – and Allah knows best – has qualified his statement and said, "unless he considers it to be lawful". However, this qualification seems to suggest that the author is referring to errors of practice, not of belief. This is difficult to accept, for the injunctions of the Shari'ah in matters of practice refer not only to action but also to belief, and in matters of belief, not only to belief but to action as well. Action is not confined to the actions of the body; there are also actions of the heart. In fact, the actions of the heart are more important, for it is from them that the actions of the body proceed. However, this objection disappears if the qualifying clause is taken to read, "unless they believe it to be lawful".

"Nor do we say that sin will not harm the sinner if he has faith..." This is a refutation of the Murji'ī view that sin does not harm someone if he has faith, just as a good deed does not benefit someone if he lacks faith. The Murji'ī view is one extreme, while the Khārijī view is the other extreme; the Khārijīs excommunicate for every sin, or every grave sin. Similarly, the Mu'tazilis say that grave sins destroy faith completely and leave nothing behind. The Khawārij say that sin extrudes the sinner from faith and lands him in not having faith (*kufr*). The Mu'tazilah, on the other hand, say that sin extrudes him from faith but does not land him in *kufr*. This is the famous "position between the two positions". However, since they say that he no longer has faith, they put him in Hell forever.

Some scholars of *kalām*, *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* take the same position when it is a question of belief rather than practice, even though the person concerned may have based his view on a particular interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the text. They say that they will excommunicate everyone who holds a heretical (*bid'ī*) belief, without differentiating between a scholar who makes a mistake and others. They charge him with infidelity and refuse to consider the possibility that he might be sincere in his effort, even though he did not get at the correct view. This is something serious, for a number of authentic traditions say that anyone who has a particle of faith in his heart will be taken out from the Fire. The texts which these

people quote in support of the view that holders of erroneous beliefs will be damned conflict with these traditions. We will return to this point later when we comment on the author's words, "those who commit grave sins will not be condemned to Hell forever, providing they die with faith in Allah's oneness".

What we want to say is that heretical (*bid'ī*) beliefs should be taken in this light. A person may be sincere is his faith, both outwardly and inwardly, but he happens to misinterpret a text and holds a heretical belief while being either qualified to make such an interpretation or a sinner because he was unqualified to make such an interpretation. Whether or not he was competent to interpret texts, we cannot say that he ceases to be a Believer because he has a heretical belief, unless there is a text to support such a statement. To say otherwise would be to follow the lines of the Mu'tazilah and the Khawārij. Nor do we say that those who have wrong beliefs should not be excommunicated.

The correct view is in between these two extreme views. If a heretical and erroneous view negates what the Prophet has affirmed or affirms what he has negated, or enjoins what he has forbidden, or forbids what he has enjoined, we must state the truth concerning it. We must tell the promised punishment that has been pronounced in the texts on such beliefs. We must clearly show that it is infidelity (*kufr*), and that one who believes it is a disbeliever (*kāfir*). This is just as we pronounce the penalties that are laid down in the texts on wrongs committed against life or property. It is on this ground that many renowned personalities of the Ahl as-Sunnah have excommunicated those who say that the Qur'ān was created, or that Allah will not be seen in the Hereafter, or that He does not know things before they happen. Abū Yūsuf says that he argued with Abū Ḥanīfah for days on the issue whether the Qur'ān was created until they both agreed that whoever says that the Qur'ān was created is a disbeliever (*kāfir*).[343]

But if the question is about a particular person, whether he will be punished or whether he is a *kāfir*, we do not pass any judgment concerning him unless we have the necessary evidence. For it is one of the gravest sins to testify against somebody that Allah will not forgive him or will not have mercy on him, and will condemn him to Hell forever – this being the penalty that a *kāfir* will receive after death. Abū Dāwūd has mentioned in his *Sunan*, under the chapter *Al-Adab* ('good behavior'), the report of Abū Hurayrah that the

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[343]See Adh-Dhahabī, *Al-'Ulū* p. 140; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, p. 251.

Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Among the Tribes of Israel there were two relatives. One was a sinner, the other a great devotee. Whenever the latter saw the former committing a sin he would ask him to keep away from it. One day, when he was indulging in a sin and the devotee asked him to refrain from it, His companion said, 'Leave me to my Lord. Are you my keeper?' He said, 'By God, He will never forgive you and will never admit you into Paradise.' When they died they were presented to God, Who addressed the devotee and said: 'Do you know Me? Do you control My favors?' Then He turned to the sinner and said, 'Enter Paradise. You have My mercy.' the other he commanded to be sent to Hell." Abū Hurayrah added, "By the One Who has my life in His hand, the devotee spoke a word that ruined his life here and in the Hereafter."[344]

This is so because we do not know if a particular person tried to find the truth and failed, and therefore deserves to be pardoned, or whether he could not get the relevant texts on a subject. It is also possible that he had strong faith and a number of good deeds which recommend him for Allah's mercy and pardon. God may forgive him as he forgave the one who advised his sons to burn his body when he died and scatter his ashes in the air because he was afraid of Allah's wrath. He thought that Allah would not be able to collect his remains and raise him up.[345]

Not stating what will happen to him in the Hereafter does not mean, however, that we should not punish the heretic in this life, ask him to recant, or kill him if he does not recant.

If the view that he holds is infidelity (*kufr*), we will say that it is *kufr*, and call him *kāfir*, provided the conditions of excommunication are fulfilled, and that will only be the case if he is a hypocrite (*munāfiq*) striving to undermine Islam (*zindīq*). No one of the *ahl al-qiblah* who is apparently a Muslim should be pronounced a *kāfir* unless he is a hypocrite and an enemy of Islam. This is made clear in the Qur'ān. Allah has created three kinds of people: infidels, whether idolaters or the People of Book, who do not testify to the unity of Allah and the prophethood of Muḥammad; Believers, who are faithful not only outwardly but also in their hearts; and hypocrites, who outwardly show that they believe but do not actually have belief inwardly. All three categories of people have been mentioned in the beginning of Sūrat Al-Baqarah. A person

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[344]Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 4901; Aḥmad, 2:323, 363. The *ḥadīth* is rated *ḥasan*.
[345]Part of *aḥadīth*, Al-Bukhārī, 3481, 7506; Muslim, 2756; Ibn Mājah, 4255; An-Nasā'ī, 4:113; Aḥmad, 2:269.

about whom it is ascertained that he does not really believe, even though he makes the two confessions of Islam, must be a *zindīq*. And the *zindīq* is a hypocrite (*munāfiq*).

This shows that both extremes are wrong, for if you call *kāfir* everyone who holds a wrong belief, it will mean that you call a *kāfir* those who are not really hypocrites. They may truly love Allah and His Prophet in their hearts and believe in them sincerely, even though they may be committing sins. Al-Bukhārī has recorded a *ḥadīth* reported by Aslām, a client of ʻUmar, from ʻUmar, that at the time of the Prophet (peace be on him) there was a man named ʻAbdullah, nicknamed Al-Ḥimār (the ass). He used to amuse the Prophet (peace be on him) with his jokes. He was flogged for drinking wine. One time he was brought and flogged, a man said, "O Allah, curse him. I wonder how many times he will be punished!" the Prophet said, "Do not curse him. By Allah, he loves Allah and His Messenger."[346] This has been the case with many other people, even scholars and divines. They make statements similar to those of the Jahmīyyah, Murjiʻah, Qadarīyyah, Shīʻah and Khawārij; however, such great scholars and divines do not completely follow such heretical sects although they may agree with them on some minor points. That is why these heretical sects try to associate themselves with renowned figures among the Elders.

One of the shameful characteristics of the innovating groups is that they have a tendency to excommunicate each other. At the same time, one of the praiseworthy characteristics of the people of knowledge is that they point out mistakes but do not excommunicate others.

An objection may be raised against the view which the author has put forward. It may be pointed out that there are a number of verses and *aḥādīth* which call certain sins *kufr*. For example, "If any fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah has revealed they are (no better than) unbelievers" [5:47]. The Prophet has said, "To abuse a Muslim is wicked (*fisq*) and to fight him is unbelief (*kufr*)."[347] This *ḥadīth* has been reported by Ibn Masʻūd and recorded by both Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. The Prophet (peace be on him) also said, "Do not turn into infidels after me, killing each other;"[348] "When a

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[346]Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Ḥudūd*, 6780; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 2606.

[347]Al-Bukhārī, 48, 6044, 7076; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 64; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, 1983; An-Nasāʼī, *Taḥrīm ad-Dam*, 7:122; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 3939; Aḥmad, 1:385, 411, 433, 439, 446, 454, 460.

[348]Part of *aḥadīth*, Al-Bukhārī, 4403, 6166, 6775, 7077; Muslim, 66, 120; An-Nasāʼī, 7:126, 127; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4686; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 3943;

Muslim calls his brother an infidel (*kāfir*), one of them surely becomes a *kāfir*;"[349] and, "There are four things which, if all are found in someone, he is a perfect hypocrite. But if one of them is found, he is a hypocrite to that extent until he gives it up. They are that he lies when he speaks, breaks the promises that he makes, violates an agreement that he makes, and abuses when he quarrels."[350] The first two *aḥādīth* have been reported by 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, and the last one is reported by 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr. "No fornicator is a Believer while he is fornicating; no thief is a Believer while he is stealing; and no drinker is a Believer while he is drinking wine; but one may repent afterwards."[351] Also, "The difference between a Believer and an unbeliever is the offering of prayer" [recorded by Muslim from Jabir].[352] He has also said, "Whosoever visits a diviner and believes in what he says, or has anal intercourse with his wife, denies what has been revealed to Muḥammad."[353] Also, "Whosoever swears by someone other than Allah commits blasphemy (*kufr*)" [recorded by Al-Ḥākim with that wording].[354] And, "Two things in my *ummah* are blasphemies (*kufr*): defaming anyone's lineage, and mourning loudly over the dead."[355] There are many more *aḥādīth* of this kind.

To answer this objection we will first point out that the Ahl as-Sunnah are agreed that if a person commits a grave sin he is not guilty of that *kufr* which calls for his excommunication and puts him outside of the realm of Islam, as the Khawārij believe. If it is such an act that he falls outside the fold of Islam, then he is an apostate and is to be killed under all circumstances. Therefore, in retaliation for murder, (if the view of the Khawārij were held) the guardian's forgiveness could not be accepted, nor would there be (any need for) punishment for fornication, theft and alcohol consumption.

Aḥmad, 2:85, 87, 104.

349 Al-Bukhārī, 6103, 6104; Muslim, 11, 60; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2637; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4687; Aḥmad, 2:18, 44, 47, 60, 112, 113, 142.

350 Al-Bukhārī, 34, 2459, 3178; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 58; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4688; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2634; An-Nasā'ī, 8:116; Aḥmad, 2:189.

351 Al-Bukhārī, 2475, 5578, 6772, 6810; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 57; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4689; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2625; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 3936; Aḥmad, 2:243, 317, 376, 386, 479.

352 Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 82; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4678; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2618; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1078; Ad-Dārimī, 1:280.

353 Abū Dāwūd, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 3904; At-Tirmidhī, *Aṭ-Ṭahārah*, 135; Ibn Mājah, *Aṭ-Ṭahārah*, 639; Aḥmad, 2:408, 429, 476. It is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

354 Discussed earlier, it is authentic.

355 Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 67; Aḥmad, 2:377, 441, 496.

Their view, therefore, as a must, is clearly and obviously known to be false in Islam.

The Ahl as-Sunnah are agreed that one who commits a grave sin hass not lost faith or Islam, nor does he enter into *kufr*, and he will not be consigned to Hell forever like the infidels, as the Mu'tazilah wrongly believe. Allah has referred to those who commit grave sins and called them Believers. For example, "You who believe! the law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder... But if any remission is made by his brother, then grant a reasonable demand and compensate him with handsome gratitude..." [2:178]. Allah has not excluded the murderer from the community of Believers; on the contrary, He has called him a brother of the person who is the guardian of the slain, a brother in religion. He has also said, "If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them... The Believers are but a single brotherhood, so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers" [49:9-10].

The Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the Consensus (of the community) all affirm that the fornicator, the robber, and the slanderer will not be killed; they will only be punished for the crimes they have committed. This shows that they are not considered apostates. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever has maligned his brother or done any other wrong should settle it with him now, before the Day when he will have nothing to pay him. If he has any good deeds his brother will be compensated from them to the extent of the damage caused. But if he has no good deeds, the evils of his brother will be transferred to his account, and he will be cast into Hell." This is recorded in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s.[356] This means that a sinner can have good deeds from which a man whom he had wronged will be compensated.

Muslim records in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whom do you consider a pauper?" the people said, "He is a pauper who does not have a dirham or a dinar." He said, "The real pauper is one who will be presented to Allah for judgment. He will have to his credit a great amount of good deeds, huge as a mountain, but he will have abused someone, grabbed the money of another, killed a third, slandered a fourth and beaten a fifth. Each one of them will be paid from his good deeds for the wrong he has done them.

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[356] Al-Bukhārī, 2449, 6534; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2419; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 2327; Aḥmad, 2:435, 506. The commentator stated that it is in both the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s but actually Muslim has not recorded this *ḥadīth*.

But it will not suffice. Then their evils will be transferred to his account, and he will be thrown into Hell" [recorded by Muslim].[357]

Allah has said, "Good deeds remove those that are evil" [11:114]. This means that after one has done wrong and he does good things afterwards, they may wipe out his evil deeds.

The Mu'tazilah and the Khawārij are one in saying that whoever commits grave sins will abide in Hell forever. They only differ with regard to the way they characterize him. The Khawārij call him *kāfir*, infidel, and the Mu'tazilah call him *fāsiq*, rebellious and wicked. This is, however, a only matter of terminology.

The Ahl as-Sunnah agree that the sinner is deserving of the threatened punishment as stated in the texts, and do not agree with the Murji'ah on the point that there is no punishment with faith, or that no good work profits disbelief. If you put the texts of promised reward that the Murji'ah cite along with the texts of threatened punishment that the Mu'tazilah and the Khawārij quote, you will realize the mistakes of both sides. There is nothing good in their works except to show the falsehood of the opposing group.

The difference that the Ahl as-Sunnah have among themselves is only semantic and inconsequential. They have disputed whether *kufr* has degrees, some worse than others, or whether faith has levels, some more perfect than others. This question is an offshoot of their controversy over the meaning of *īmān*, whether it is confession as well as action and whether it increases and decreases. However, they are united on the point that whomever Allah calls *kāfir* they will also call *kāfir*. They say that we cannot imagine that Allah will call *kāfir* someone who judges according to rules He has not revealed and his Messenger should also call him *kāfir*, but we should desist from calling him *kāfir*. Those among the Ahl as-Sunnah who say that *imān* is confession and action and that it increases and decreases, also say that the commission of a grave sin is a *kufr* of action, not a *kufr* of belief, and that *kufr* has degrees, some worse than others, just like *imān*.

But those who say that *imān* is the affirmation of the heart (*at-tasdīq*), that actions are not included in the connotation of *īmān*, and that *kufr* is denial which neither increases nor decreases, say that the commission of a grave sin is *kufr* in a metaphorical rather than real sense, for after committing real *kufr* one goes out of the fold of Islam. In a similar manner they interpret the texts that call different

[357]Muslim, Al-Birr wa as-Salāḥ, 2581; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2418; Aḥmad, 2:303, 334, 372.

actions *īmān*. For example, they say that the discipline of prayer that has been called *īmān* in the verse, "And Allah will never make your prayers (*īmān*) of no effect" [2:143] – referring to the prayers said in the direction of Jerusalem – has been called *īmān* metaphorically, because without *īmān* it carries no weight, or because it is a sure proof of *īmān* and a demonstration that its performer is a Believer. This is the reason, they say, that when a disbeliever offers prayers like our prayers, we become sure that he has embraced Islam.

There is no difference among the jurists of the *ummah* that sinners will face punishment even though they verbally confess and believe in the heart what has been revealed to the Messenger. They denounce only those who say that they will abide in Hell forever, that is, the Khawārij and the Mu'tazilah. But it will be worse if you exceed the limits in denouncing them, that is, if you first attribute to them what does not follow from their words and then condemn them for it. We have been asked to be fair, even with infidels, in our discussion with them. We should be all the more fair to ourselves. Allah has said, "You who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety, and fear Allah" [5:9].

However, it must be noted that failure to judge by the revealed law of God may be blasphemy calling for excommunication, or it may be an ordinary sin, grave or light, or it may be blasphemy in a metaphorical sense or in a small degree – whichever is the case - according to the condition of the person concerned. If a ruler believes that it is not his duty to judge by Allah's law or that he is free to judge or not to judge by it, or that he will not bother about it even though he knows that he must, then he is guilty of *kufr*, the type of which removes him from Islam.

If, on the other hand, he believes that he should judge by Allah's law, and is aware that it applies to the case before him, but he does not comply with it, knowing that he thus exposes himself to Allah's punishment, he is a sinner. One may call him a *kāfir* in a metaphorical sense, or say that he is guilty of minor *kufr*. But if he does not know what the ruling of Allah in the case before him is, even though he has made every effort to know it, and he then goes wrong, he will be said to be mistaken. He will be rewarded for the effort he made to know Allah's ruling and his mistake will be forgiven.

The author's words, "Nor do we say that sin will not harm the sinner if he has faith," are directed against the Murji'ah. They could not form an opinion about some people who appeared in the early

years whom the Companions agreed should be killed if they did not recant. Qudāmah Ibn Maz'ūn and a number of others with him drank wine after it had been forbidden and argued, based on the verse, "On those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, there is no blame for what they ate (in the past) when they guard themselves from evil, and believe, and do deeds of righteousness" [5:96]. When the matter was reported to 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, he consulted 'Alī and other Companions. They all agreed that if those people confessed that wine was forbidden they should be flogged, but if they insisted that it was lawful they should be killed. 'Umar then said to Qudāmah, "You are wrong. You will go to Hell if you do not fear and believe, do deeds of righteousness, and give up drinking." As for the verse, it was revealed in a different context.

After the battle of Uḥud, when Allah prohibited drinking, some of the Companions wondered what would happen to their friends who had died and had drunk wine. It was for them that Allah revealed the verse and made it clear that if one drank or ate something when it was not forbidden it would not harm him if he had faith, feared God, and did deeds of righteousness. Similar was the case of those who prayed towards Jerusalem and died before people were commanded to face the Ka'bah. When Qudāmah and his companions realized their mistake and feared that they might not be forgiven, 'Umar wrote to him and quoted the verse, "*Ḥā Mīm.* The revelation of this Book is from Allah, Exalted in Power, Full of Knowledge, Who forgives sin, accepts repentance, is strict in punishment, and has a long reach (in all things)" [40:1-3]. Then he said, "I do not know which sin of yours is greater: your commission of the forbidden act, or your despair of the mercy of Allah." What the Companions agreed upon in their days was also agreed upon by the later religious leaders (a'immah) of Islam.

(68) We hope that the righteous among the Believers will receive Allah's pardon and be sent to Paradise through His mercy, but we cannot be certain about them. We cannot testify that they will certainly go to Paradise. As for wrongdoers, we pray to Allah to forgive them. Although we do fear for them, we are not in despair for them.

Every Muslim must believe in what the author has said here concerning himself and others. Allah has referred to all these points in the Qur'ān. For example, "Those whom they call upon do desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord, even those who are

nearest. They hope for His mercy and fear His wrath. For the wrath of your Lord is something to take heed of" [17:57]; "Be not afraid of them, but fear Me if you have faith" [3:175]; "And fear Me and Me alone" [2:41]; "Fear none but Me" [2:40]; "So fear not the people, but fear Me" [5:44]. Allah has also praised those who fear Him with these words, "Verily those who live in awe for fear of their Lord, who believe in the signs of their Lord, who join not (in worship) partners with their Lord, and who dispense their charity with their hearts full of fear, because they will return to their Lord, it is they who hasten in every good work, and they who are foremost in them" [23:57-61].

Aḥmad in his *Musnad* and At-Tirmidhī in his *Sunan* record that 'Ā'ishah asked the Prophet (peace be on him) if the words, "those who dispense their charity with their hearts full of fear" [23:60] refer to those who are guilty of adultery, drinking and theft. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "No, daughter of Siddiq! They are the ones who fast, pray, and give alms, and fear that their deeds may not be accepted."[358]

Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣrī said of the Companions of the Prophet, "By Allah, they obeyed Allah most and did numerous good deeds. Still they feared that their deeds might be turned down." He added, "A true Believer does good deeds and fears; a hypocrite, on the other hand, immerses himself in wrong and does not fear."

Allah has said, "Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and struggled) in the path of Allah – they hope for the mercy of Allah. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" [2:218]. Look at this verse. Allah has associated obedience with having hope in Allah, because one can have justifiable hope only while fulfilling those causes that will lead to what one hopes for. This is true not only about the things of this world but also of the rewards in the Hereafter. A man who has very fertile land but does not till it or sow seeds in it, yet hopes that it will produce a crop as rich as one which a well-cultivated land will produce, is certainly a fool. Similarly a fool is one who hopes to have a son without having intercourse with his wife, or to become a great scholar of the time without studying extensively. The same is true of one who hopes for great rewards and favors in the Hereafter, but does not carry out

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[358] At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr*, 3175; Aḥmad, 6:159, 205; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4198. The transmitters of the *ḥadīth* are reliable, but the chain of transmission is broken (munqati'), for 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Wahāb Al-Hamadhānī, who reported it from 'Ā'ishah, never met her. Al-Albānī concludes it is *ḥasan* based on supporting evidence.

what Allah has commanded or refrain from what He has forbidden, aornd seek His pleasure.

If you hope to have something you need to do a few things. First, you should love the thing you want; second, you should fear you might not get it; and third, you should work for it diligently and sincerely. A hope which is not accompanied by these things is simply an idle wish. Hope is one thing and wishing another. Everyone who entertains hope should be apprehensive, and every traveler who is apprehensive should exert himself and hasten for fear he might not reach his destination. Allah has said, "Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him, but he forgives anything else, whom He pleases" [4:48]. The polytheist cannot hope for pardon; Allah has refused it. All other sins are at His mercy, He may forgive them if He will, or punish if He will.

Aṭ-Ṭabarānī has recorded in his *Mu'jam* that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "On the Day of Judgment, the registers of the people will be of three kinds: one from which nothing will be pardoned, for it will be a record of setting up partners with Allah." Then he recited the verse, "Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him" [4:48, 116]. "In the second register," he continued, "everything that is written will be taken into account, as it will list such wrongs as one has done to one's fellows. Whatever is there in the third register, will not be of much importance to Allah, for it will mention those wrongs that one has done to oneself, wrongs that are between man and his Lord."[359]

Scholars have differentiated between grave and light sins in different ways. We will discuss them when we comment on the author's words, "Those who commit grave sins of the *ummah* of Muḥammad will not be condemned to Hell forever." Here I will draw attention to a particular point. It sometimes happens that people commit a grave sin, feel ashamed, realize the gravity of the act, and are very much afraid. This reduces the guilt and brings down the sin to the level of light sins. On the other hand, if they commit a light sin and feel no shame or care about it and play it down, this makes it serious and grave. It is a matter of the heart, something more than action, that everyone can feel within himself and others.

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[359]The *ḥadīth* is not found in At-Ṭabarāni's *Mu'jam*, neither *Al-Kabīr* nor *Aṣ-Ṣaghīr*. It is reported by Aḥmad, 6:240; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 4:575, 576. The latter considers it to be an authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) *ḥadīth*, but Adh-Dhahabī does not agree with him on the ground that Sadaqah, the transmitter of the first *ḥadīth* (4:575) has been regarded to be a weak narrator, and Ibn Babnus, the narrator of the second *ḥadīth* (4:576) is not very well known.

Another thing which should be noted is that people of virtue and compassion are more likely to be pardoned for their sins than others. The penalty of the Fire is waived for various reasons. I will list here more than ten reasons which are deduced from the Qur'ān and Sunnah.[360]

The first is repentance. Allah has referred to it time and again in many verses, such as, "Soon will they face destruction except those who repent" [19:60]; "On them will be the curse of those entitled to a curse, except those who repent and make amends..." [2:160]. However, repentance must be sincere. The benefits of sincere repentance are not confined to any particular category of sins. People, however, have different opinions regarding the question of whether to be acceptable repentance has to be total or not. That is, if one repents of one sin and not of others, will his repentance be accepted? the correct view is that it will be accepted.[361] People have also discussed the question whether sins committed before Islam are erased after embracing Islam even if one does not repent of them, or must one repent of them, too? Suppose one embraces Islam but does not abstain, for example, from adultery and drinking, will he have to account after Islam also for his earlier drinking and adultery? Will he have to repent of those sins in addition to embracing Islam? Or will he have to repent of all the sins he had committed? the last view is the correct view. He has to repent of all the sins he had committed until the time he embraced Islam. The *ummah* agrees that repentance is one of the reasons for which sins are forgiven and penalties waived. Nothing but repentance draws pardon for all the sins. Allah has said, "Say: My servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the mercy of Allah. For Allah forgives all sins. He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" [39:53]. This is for those who repent, since Allah has said just after this verse, "Turn you to your Lord (in repentance) and bow to His will" [39:54].

The second reason for pardon is *istighfār*, to ask for forgiveness. Allah has said, "Nor was He going to send them a penalty while they ask for forgiveness" [8:33]. *Istighfār* is sometimes mentioned by itself and sometimes along with *tawbah* (repentance). When it is mentioned alone it implies *tawbah*, just as when *tawbah* is mentioned alone it implies istighfār. Each is included in the connotation of the other. But when one is joined with

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[360] Ibn Taymīyyah has mentioned these reasons in detail. See his *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 7:487 -501.

[361] Ibn Al-Qayyīm has discussed this point at length in *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, pp. 273-276.

the other, *istighfār* means to request exemption from the penalty of the sin one has already committed, and *tawbah* means to turn to Allah and pray for protection against the evil consequences of a sin one might commit in the future.

Examples of this kind of usage in the Qur'ān are many, for example, the words *faqīr* and *miskīn*. When they are used separately they imply each other, but when they are used together each has its own meaning. Allah has said, "For expiation feed ten *masākīn* (indigent persons)" [5:89]; and "But if any is unable to do so, he should feed sixty *masākīn* [58:4]; and, "If you conceal (charity) and make it reach the *fuqarā'* (the one really in need), that is best for you" [2:271]. In these verses the words are mentioned singly and convey the same sense, both of the needy one who has less than he needs and of the pauper who has nothing at all. But when they are mentioned together as in the verse, "Alms are for the *fuqarā'* and the *masākīn*" [9:60], they refer to different things. *Fuqarā'* means needy and *masākīn* means pauper. However, some people understand the words in just the opposite way. Other pairs of words which imply each other when used separately, and mean different things when used together are *ithm* (sin) and *'udwān* (transgression), *birr* (virtue) and *taqwā* (piety), *fusūq* (defiance) and *'iṣyān* (disobedience). A somewhat similar pair is *kufr* and *nifāq*. However, *kufr* (infidelity) has a wider connotation; when it is used separately it includes *nifāq* (hypocrisy), but when they are used together they mean different things. Another example is *īmān* and *islām*[362] which, God willing, we will discuss at length later.

The third means of pardon is provided by good deeds, for one good act will fetch ten equal rewards and one evil act will incur only one equal penalty. Woe, therefore, to those whose one-to-one penalties outdo their ten-fold rewards. Allah has said, "The good deeds remove those that are evil" [11:14], and the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Do good after evil so that it may wipe out the latter."[363]

The fourth reason is the suffering one undergoes in the world. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "When a Believer suffers from illness or experiences hardship or loss, grief or anxiety, or feels the prick of a thorn, part of his sins are forgiven."[364] In the *Musnad*, it

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[362]For discussion of these terms see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 7:162-170.

[363]Part of *aḥadīth*, At-Tirmidhī, Al-Birr, 1988; Aḥmad, 5:153, 158, and 5:228, 236; Ad-Dārimī, *Ar-Riqāq*, 2:323. At-Tirmidhī considers the *ḥadīth* to be *ḥasan*.

[364]Al-Bukhārī, 5641, 5642; Muslim, *Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, 2573; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-*

is mentioned that when the verse, "Whoever does an evil will be punished for it" [4:123], was revealed, Abū Bakr said, "Messenger of Allah, this verse will crush us. Who is there among us who does not commit a sin!" the Prophet (peace be on him) consoled him, "Abū Bakr, don't you exert yourself? Don't you grieve? Don't you suffer from pain? You will be rewarded for all these sufferings."[365] Suffering is itself a cause for pardon. If you bear it patiently you are rewarded for it; but when you grumble over it, you sin. However, patience and impatience are different from suffering. Suffering is caused by Allah, not man; it is a punishment from Allah for our sins; consequently it wipes out sin. On the other hand, patience and grumbling are human acts, calling for reward or punishment. Suffering brings reward, and since it is caused by Allah, not man, its reward is a gift from Allah, an unearned favor. Allah has said, "He gives him from His own presence a great reward" [4:40]. Sickness, therefore, is a reward and an expiation for earlier sins. People often identify the two, but they are not same: one is the cause of the other.

The fifth cause of pardon is the torment of the grave. We will discuss that in detail later.

The sixth cause is the supplications which the Believers offer for their brethren during their lives or after their death.

The seventh cause is the benefits which one is entitled to for the good deeds one does and which one offers to another – deeds like giving alms, reading the Qur'ān or performing Hajj. We will return to this subject later.

The eighth cause is the fear and hardship people will experience on the Day of Judgment.

The ninth cause is what is mentioned in this *ḥadīth* recorded in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "When the Believers cross the great Bridge (*aṣ-Ṣirāṭ*), they will be detained at a small bridge between Paradise and Hell, and the wrongs that they caused to others will be avenged. People will first be purified of their sins and then allowed into Paradise."[366]

Janā'iz, 966; Aḥmad, 2:302, 335, 3:18, 48, 61, 81. See also Al-Bukhārī, 5640, and Muslim, 2572.

[365] Aḥmad, 1:11; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:74, 75, Al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 3:373. The chain of the *ḥadīth* is broken. However, there is a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* reported by Abū Hurayrah to strengthen it; see Muslim, 2574, and Ibn Ḥibban, 1736.

[366] Al-Bukhārī, 2440, 6535; Aḥmad, 3:13, 57, 63, 74. The author implies that Muslim also recorded this *ḥadīth*, but this is not correct.

The tenth cause is the intercession of those entitled to intercede. We have discussed this in detail before.

The eleventh cause is the grace of Allah not prayed for by anyone. He has said, "And He will forgive anything else, to whom He pleases" [4:48, 116].

Now, if, in spite of all these facilities, a person is not pardoned, it means that his sins were great. He should then enter into the Fire, that his sins may be burned out and he may be purified. No one will remain forever in the Fire who has a bit of faith in his heart or who has testified that "there is no god except Allah". This has been mentioned in the *ḥadīth* reported by Anas which was mentioned earlier.

Let me conclude: In view of all that has been said, we cannot be positive and definite about anyone of the *ummah* that he will go to Paradise or Hell. The only exceptions are those about whom the Prophet (peace be on him) said that they will go to Paradise. About others we hope for them as well as fear for them.

(69) Anyone who feels secure (from Allah's punishment) or who loses hope (in His mercy) falls outside the realm of Islam. The correct course for the *ahl al-qiblah* lies in between these two ways.

The Muslim must both fear Allah's wrath and hope for His mercy. The fear that has been commended is what keeps one away from the things forbidden by Allah. But when fear exceeds this limit one is likely to lose hope and despair. True, praiseworthy hope, on the other hand, is what helps one obey Allah in the light of His guidance, expecting His reward, or repent after committing a sin and turning to Allah looking for His forgiveness. Allah says, "Those who believe and those who migrate and struggle in the way of Allah – they are the ones who hope for Allah's mercy; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" [2:218].

But those who indulge in sin and do nothing good, and put hope in Allah's mercy are mistaken. They entertain only deception, false hopes and vain desires. Abū 'Alī Ar-Rudhabārī, may Allah bless him, said, "Fear and hope are the two wings of a bird. If they are fit, the bird is fit to fly; but if one of them is not fit, the bird cannot fly; and if both are unfit, the bird is on death's doorstep."

Allah has praised people who have fear and hope in these words, "Is one who worships devoutly during the hours of the night, prostrating himself or standing (in adoration), who takes heed of the Hereafter, and who places his hope in the mercy of his Lord (like one who does not)? Say: Are they equal, those who know and

those who do not know?" [39:9]; and, "Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, while they call on their Lord in fear and hope" [32:16]. Hope should be accompanied by fear; otherwise it will produce a feeling of false security. Fear, on the other hand, should be accompanied by hope; otherwise it will degenerate into despair. When you fear something, you flee from it. But in the case of Allah, when you fear Him you turn to Him. The God-fearing flees from his Lord to his Lord.

The author of *Manāzil as-Sā'irīn* has said that fear is the lowest level of a spiritual aspirant.[367] This is not true. Hope and fear, as we have explained them, are his highest levels. The Prophet has said, "Allah the Almighty says, 'I am with the expectation that my servant has of Me. He should therefore expect (of Me) as he wishes.'" This is an authentic *ḥadīth*.[368] Muslim has recorded another *ḥadīth* in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Jābir that he heard the Prophet (peace be on him) say, three days before his death, "None of you should die except with having good expectations of your Lord."[369] This is why some people say that when you are ill you should have more hope than fear; but when you are well you should have more fear than hope.

Others have said that whoever serves Allah with love only is a heretic (*zindīq*); whoever serves Him with fear only is a Khārijī (Ḥarūrī); whoever serves Him only with hope is a Murji'ī; and whoever serves him with all three – love, hope and fear – is a true Believer and a true Believer in Allah's oneness (*mawaḥḥid*). Maḥmūd Al-Warrāq has very rightly said:

> Were you to see the reward for small deeds,
> you would certainly love to do great deeds;
> and were you to see the punishment for small sins,
> you would be certainly keep away from them.

(70) One does not leave the realm of *īmān* except by repudiating what brought him into it.

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[367]See Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 2, pp. 37-41.

[368]Aḥmad, 3:391, 4:106; Ibn Ḥibban, 2468. Abū Hurayrah's version of the *ḥadīth* is recorded by Al-Bukhārī, 7405, 7505, 7537; Muslim, 2675; At-Tirmidhī, 2388; Ibn Mājah, 3822; Aḥmad, 2:251, 413, 480, 482, 534.

[369]Muslim, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2877; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Janā'iz*, 3113; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4167; Aḥmad, 3:293, 325, 330, 39O.

The author is countering here the view of the Khawārij and the Mu'tazilah, who say that whoever commits a major sin (*kabīrah*) ceases to be a Believer. He is reinforcing what he said earlier, "We do not call anyone of the *ahl al-qiblah* infidel (*kāfir*) on account of a sin, unless he believes that it is lawful." We have already commented on that point.

(71) *Īmān* (faith) is to profess with the tongue and believe in the heart that all that the Prophet (peace be on him) is authentically known to have said or enjoined is true. *Īmān* is one, and with regard to its essence all Believers are equal. They differ only with respect to their fear of Allah and piety, abstention from following evil desires and pursuance of what is best.

Opinions differ as to what *īmān* means. Mālik, Ash-Shāfi'ī, Ahmad, Al-Awzā'ī, Isḥāq Ibn Rahaway, the scholars of the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, and the scholars of Madinah, may Allah bless them, as well as the Dhahiris and a faction of theologians think that *īmān* is to affirm (*taṣdīq*) in the heart, profess with the tongue and act with the body. Many of our scholars, on the other hand, believe what Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, may Allah bless him, has said, namely that *īmān* is to profess with the tongue and affirm in the heart. Some even say that oral profession does not form part of the essence of *īmān*, it is an additional pillar of *īmān*. This is the view of Abū Mansūr Al-Māturidī, may Allah bless him. It has also been ascribed to Abū Ḥanīfah, may Allah be pleased with him. The Karramis believe that *īmān* is simply a profession by the tongue; hence, according to their view, the hypocrites are perfect Believers. Nevertheless, they believe that the hypocrites will suffer the punishment which Allah has promised them; thus they contradict themselves.

Al-Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān and Abū Al-Ḥussayn As-Ṣāliḥī, a leading libertarian (Qadarī), believe that *īmān* is a kind of knowledge in the heart. This view is worse than the one just stated, for it implies that Pharaoh and his people were Believers, since they knew that Moses and Aaron, peace and blessings of Allah be on them, were true prophets even though they denied them. This is clear from what Moses said to Pharaoh, "You know very well that these things have been sent down by none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth as eye-opening evidence" [17:102], as well as from what Allah observed about them, "And they rejected those signs in iniquity and arrogance though their souls were convinced thereof. So see what

was the end of those who acted corruptly!" [27:14]. The People of the Book knew that Muḥammad (peace be on him) was a prophet as they knew their own sons, but they were not believers in him; in fact, they were his deniers and opponents. Abū Ṭālib, too, would be among his Believers according to their view, for he is reported to have said, "I know that the religion of Muḥammad
is the best of all the religions of mankind. Were I not to be scolded and abused, I would have confessed it openly."

Actually, even Iblīs, would also be a perfect Believer according to Al-Jahm's view. He did not plead ignorance of Allah; he knew Him well, as he said, "My Lord, give me then respite until the Day the dead are raised" [15:36]; "My Lord, because you have put me in the wrong..." [15:39], and "Then, by Your Power, I will put them all in the wrong" [38:82].

For Al-Jahm, *kufr* is ignorance of Allah. No one, however, is more ignorant of Allah than he, for he reduces Allah to a mere Being and strips Him of all His attributes. There can be no greater ignorance than this. He is, therefore, a disbeliever (*kāfir*) according to his own testimony.

Besides these, there are other views which are in some sense modifications or elaborations of these views. I have not mentioned them, as I do not want to lengthen this commentary. Abū Al-Mu'īn Al-Nasafī has discussed them at length in his *Tabṣirat al-Adillah*; and other writers have also discussed them.

In brief, *īmān* is either a function of the heart, tongue and body, as the Elders, the three imams and others believe, as we have mentioned; or it is a function of the heart and tongue, but not of bodily deeds, as Abū Ḥanīfah, according to Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, and the scholars following him believe; or it is a function of the tongue only, as the Karramis assert; or it is a function of the heart only, as Al-Jahm and Abū Mansūr Al-Māturīdī think, though the former considers it to be knowledge, while the latter considers it to be conviction (*taṣdīq*). Of these views those that the Karramis and Al-Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān hold are obviously false.

The difference between Abū Ḥanīfah and other imam*s* of the Ahl as-Sunnah is not substantial. For Abū Ḥanīfah the actions of the body are necessary consequences of faith in the heart; for others, they are part of faith; but all of them believe that one who commits a major sin does not thereby cease to be a Muslim; he is at the mercy of Allah, Who may forgive him or punish him, as He wills. Their difference, therefore, is merely a matter of semantics, which does not materially affect *imān*. Those who judge that one who does not

offer prayer is an infidel cite other reasons besides reiterating this principle,[370] for although the Prophet (peace be on him) denied *imān* for the fornicator, the adulterer, the thief, the drinker and the robber, they were not dubbed non-believers. This is a point on which all are agreed.[371]

There is also complete agreement among the Ahl as-Sunnah on the point that what Allah requires from us is both *qawl* (stating of faith) and 'amal (action). *Qawl* includes both confession (*iqrar*) of the tongue and conviction (*taṣdīq*) of the heart. This is the meaning of *qawl* in the statement, "*Īmān* is *qawl* and *'amal.*" Hence the difference boils down to the question of whether the term *īmān* covers all that is required of man or only a part of it. In other words, is it that *īmān* as such means only *qawl*, and action (*'amal*) does not enter into its connotation, and therefore, when it refers to both *qawl* and *'amal*, it refers to the latter metaphorically? This is the point which is in dispute.

It is also agreed upon that one who believes in the heart and professes with the tongue but abstains from bodily action is a sinner against Allah and His Messenger and exposes himself to Allah's punishment. However, some of those who do not include action in the connotation of *īmān* have said that, since *īmān* is one thing, their own *īmān* is like the *īmān* of Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddiq and 'Umar, even like the *īmān* of the prophets and messengers, and the angels Gabriel and Michael. Here they are going to an extreme. *Kufr* is to *imān* as blindness is to eyesight. There is no doubt that men differ in their eyesight: some cannot see well during the day while others cannot see well at night; some can see a thick cord but not one that is thin except with lenses; some can see from an abnormally long distance, but others cannot.

In the same way - Allah knows best - we should understand the author's words, "The Believers are equal in the essence of faith." He asserts equality in the essence of faith only, not in other respects. In fact, faith in the faith formula (*kalimah*), "[t]here is no god except Allah," varies in its radiance from heart to heart. There are, in fact, innumerable degrees of faith's radiance which are known only to

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[370]See Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 2:179-180; Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī*, (ed. Muḥammad Sālim Munaysīn and Sha'bān Muḥammad Ismā'īl; Cairo: Maktabah Al-Jamhurīyyah Al- 'Arabīyyah; and Riyadh, Maktabat Ar-Riyadh Al-Ḥadithah, n.d.) vol. 2, pp. 442-447.

[371]See the discussion by Muḥammad Anwar Al-Kashmīrī, *Fayḍ al-Barī 'alā Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī,* Cairo, Mataba'at Al-Ḥijāzī, 1357/1398, vol. I, pp. 53-54, and Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 7:297.

Allah. In some hearts it is as bright as the sun, in some it is like stars, in some like a big lamp, in some like a glowing candle, and in some like a flickering light. That it is why, on the Day of Judgment the light of the Believers will shine according to the strength of their faith in Allah's unity, and the nobility of their practices. As the light of the kalimah increases, doubt and disbelief burn away until one reaches a stage where all uncertainties and vascilations are completely destroyed. This is the stage of the true Believer in *tawḥīd* where the heights of his faith are fully secured against the assault of all miscreants. Whoever knows that will know the meaning of the Prophet's words, "Allah has barred him from the Fire who says, 'There is no god except Allah,' and seeks no one's pleasure but Allah's,"[372] or "No one will enter the Fire who says, 'There is no god except Allah.'"[373]

Many people have difficulty in understanding *aḥādīth* of this nature. Some say that they were later abrogated; some think that they had been said before rules and regulations were given; some believe that the Fire which has been referred to in them is the Fire into which the infidels and hypocrites will be thrown; some are of the opinion that they only negate that the Believers will dwell in the Fire forever, and so on. Let us note first that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not say that one who simply utters the *kalimah* with his tongue is barred from the Fire, for that goes against the well--established teachings of Islam. The hypocrites utter the *kalimah* with their tongues, but they will enter into the depths of the Fire along with the infidels. It is also plain that the value of an action depends not on its formal characteristics or on the number of times it is repeated. It depends on the nobility of the inner state of the heart which produces it. Think over the *ḥadīth* which says that on the Day of Judgment a card will be placed on one side of the Balance, and

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[372]Part of a long *ḥadīth*, Al-Bukhārī, 425, 1186, 5401, 6423, 6938; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 33; Aḥmad, 4:44, 5:449.

[373]Muslim has the *ḥadīth* (*ḥadīth* no. 29) on the authority of 'Ubādah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever witnesses that there is no god other than Allah, and that Muḥammad is His messenger, Allah will not let enter the Fire." Muslim (*ḥadīth* no. 32) and Al-Bukhārī (*ḥadīth* no. 128) have the *ḥadīth* on the authority of Anas that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah will not allow a person to enter into the Fire who has testified that there is no god but Allah and Muḥammad is His Messenger." However, these *aḥādīth* should not be taken literally; for various verses of the Qur'ān and a number of the Prophet's *aḥādīth* state that the sinners among the faithful will be punished for a time in the Fire and then released. They should be qualified and interpreted to mean that those who witness to God's unity and Muḥammad's prophecy and act righteously will not enter the Fire.

ninety-nine registers as far as the eyes can see will be placed on the other pan, but the one will outweigh the ninety-nine and its holder will be set free. We know that all those who believe in Allah's oneness will be given a card like this, but many of them will go to the Fire. Think of the faith of the person who killed a hundred men, nevertheless his faith urged him to travel to a village (and explore the possibility of forgiveness) while he was suffering from a pain in the chest and struggling with death.[374] Think also of the faith of that harlot who took off her headcovering, drew water in it and offered it to a thirsty dog, and was forgiven on that account.[375]

Faith is like intelligence in that it differs from person to person. Although everyone has a core of intelligence which qualifies him as a rational being and distinguishes him from an imbecile, some are definitely more intelligent than others. There are also variations in things that are prescribed or forbidden. One duty may be higher than another; similarly one forbidden thing may be more reprehensible than another. Some people have even extended this distinction to the concepts of rationality and obligation.

The point that faith in the details of the religion represents an increase in faith in its principles is quite obvious. We know that the duties in the beginning of the revelation were less than those when it was completed. Again, the duties of those whom the details of the religion have not reached are not like the duties of those whom they have reached. The Negus of Abyssinia and others like him were obviously not required to believe in all the details.

It is also obvious that the faith that produces actions of the heart and the body is more perfect than the faith which does not produce them. Similarly, the knowledge upon which one acts is more perfect than the knowledge upon which one does not act. What cannot produce anything is plainly weaker than what can. The Prophet said, "One who is told about something is not equal to one who sees it."[376] When Moses was told that his people were worshiping a heifer, he did not cast the stone tablets down; he threw them only when he actually saw them worshiping the calf. The reason is not that he doubted the information Allah gave him; the reason is that the importance of a thing informed, no matter how reliable is the informer, is often not realized to the extent it is when it is seen.

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[374]See the *ḥadīth* 3470 in Al-Bukhārī and 2766 in Muslim.

[375]Al-Bukhārī, 3467; Muslim, 2245.

[376]Ibn Ḥibban, 2088; At-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 12451. With a different wording the *ḥadīth* has been reported in Aḥmad, 1:215, 271; Ibn Ḥibban, 2087; and Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 2:321. It is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

Abraham, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, "My Lord, show me how you give life to the dead." (Allah) said: "Do you not believe?" He said: "Yes, but to satisfy my own heart" [2:260].

For one who has to perform the pilgrimage or pay *zakāh*, his faith obliges him to know exactly what he has to do, and to believe in all the details. But one who does not have these duties is only required to believe in the general fundamentals, not in their details. When a person embraces Islam he is asked to believe in the basic principles. But when the time for prayer comes, he is required to believe that it is his duty, and that he must offer it. In short, people are not equal with respect to the details they must believe in.

There is no doubt that one who has firm sincerity in his heart that cannot be overriden by desires or doubts will not commit sins. If one is not afflicted with desires and doubts, or one of them, one will not commit sins. However, at the time of committing a sin, his heart is occupied with the sin and it loses its sincerity and remembrance of a threatened punishment. Therefore, he sins. This is why - Allah knows best - the *ḥadīth* states, "When one fornicates or commits adultery, he does not do so while he has faith."[377] This means that when he is committing fornication or adultery his faith in its prohibition disappears, even though faith in the fundamentals remains there in his heart. He regains faith in the prohibition of fornication or adultery afterwards. Allah has described pious men in these words, "Those who fear Allah, when a thought of evil from Satan assaults them, bring Allah to remembrance, when lo! they see (aright)" [7:201].

Commenting on the verse, Mujāhid, as Layth has reported, said, "The verse refers to those people who, when they are about to commit a sin, remember Allah and refrain from it. Know that anger and passion are two root causes of sin. If he then sees properly, he will withdraw from that sin." The wicked, on the other hand, do not withdraw. "But their brethren (the evil ones)," Allah says, "plunge them deeper into error and never relax their efforts" [7:702]. That is, Satan and his army lead their human followers deeper and deeper into error and do not relax. Ibn 'Abbās said that the verse means that neither do men recoil from evil nor do their satanic collaborators relax their effort to mislead them. When they fail to see evil, their hearts lose their light, and the evil ones plunge them further and further into darkness.

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[377]This *ḥadīth* was discussed earlier. It is authentic.

The faith that is then left cannot restrain them. They lose the light of their heart, cease to perceive evil and no longer feel shame or fear from it. They are like those who cannot see because they have closed their eyes even though they are not blind. When the heart is covered by a thick layer of sin, it cannot see the truth even though it is not as blind as the heart of an infidel. The Prophet (peace be on him) referred to this when he said, "When a person commits adultery, faith is withdrawn from him; when he repents it is restored."[378]

Differences that are found among the Ahl as-Sunnah regarding *imān* are only a matter of semantics. They are nothing to worry about, unless one group quarrels with another and divides the *ummah*. It is also wrong that discredited theologians like the Murji'ah and others should use them as ploys to indulge in sin, and say that since they are perfect Believers, Muslims and friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah, they do not have to worry about sin. The Murji'ah believe that sin does not harm them if they have faith, which is absolutely wrong.

Abū Ḥanīfah, may Allah be pleased with him, understood *imān* according to its lexical meaning as well as based on evidence from the words of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. The other imams, may Allah bless them, too, understand its literal legal (*shāri'*) meaning in the light of the words of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, which, in addition to conviction (*taṣdīq*), also mention some other properties of the term. This is in line with what the Shari'ah does with other terms like *ṣalāh* (prayer) and *ḥajj* (pilgrimage).

One of the arguments which the followers of Abū Ḥanīfah advance is that semantically *imān* means *taṣdīq*, 'to believe or to testify'. Allah has quoted the words that the brothers of Joseph said to their father, "*mā anta bi mū'minīn lanā*", that is, *bi muṣaddiqīn lanā* ('you will not believe us'). Some of them have even claimed a consensus of philologists on this point. Further, this meaning of the word, 'believing in the heart' (*taṣdīq bi al-qalb*), is the obligation on man which he owes to Allah. He must believe that the Prophet (peace be on him) is correct in whatever he conveys from Allah. Whoever does that is a *mū'min* (believer) as far as he and Allah are concerned. As for *iqrar* (verbal confession), it is a condition for treating him as a Muslim in this life. However, this is only one opinion, as we have said before. The opposite of *īmān* is *kufr*,

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[378]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4690. Al-Ḥakīm has called the *ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ* (see his *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:22) and Adh-Dhahabī has agreed with him.

which means 'to give lie to' or 'to deny'. Since this is obviously an act of the heart, *īmān,* which is its opposite, will also be an act of the heart. The verse, "Whosoever denies Allah after he has believed (in Him), except he who is forced into it, although his heart is firm in *īmān...*" [16:106], shows that the heart is the locus of *īmān,* not the tongue. Further, if *īmān* were a combination of *qawl* and *'amal,* it would be completely lost when one of the parts is lost. Again, *'amal* has been conjoined with *īmān* on various occasions in the Qur'ān, such as the oft-repeated phrase "who believe (*amanū*) and do (*'amilū*) good." This is another indication that actions and *īmān* are different.

Objections have been raised against arguing from the fact that *īmān* means *taṣdīq*. It has been said, for example, that *taṣdīq* is not a synonym of *imān*, although in some contexts it does mean *īmān*. A similar objection has been raised against the claim that *īmān* and *islām* are synonymous. One argument that shows that *taṣdīq* is not a synonym of *īmān* is that when someone pronounces the statement of a reporter to be true, we say *ṣaddaqa-hu*, but not *amanahu* or *amana bihi*, although we can say *amana lahu* ('he believed in his statement'). Allah has said, "*amana lahu Lūṭ*" [29:26, 'Lot believed in his words']. Or "*fa ma amana li Mūsā illa dhurriyatun min qawmihi*" [10:83, 'no one believed in Moses' (promise) except some children of his people']; and "*yu'minu bi Allah wa yu'minu li al-mū'minīn*" [9:61, 'he believes in Allah and has faith in the Believers']. He has thus differentiated between *īmān bi* and *īmān li*. The former is used for the information given, and the latter for the informant. This point cannot be countered by pointing out that it is proper to say, *mā anta bi musaddiqīn lanā* - 'you are not going to believe in us', for the preposition li is used here in order to strengthen the participle *muṣaddiq*. Everyone knows that it is sometimes used to strengthen the verbal noun.[379]

In short, we never say, *qad amantuhu* or *ṣaddaqtu lahu*. We rather say, *amantu lahu* or *aqrartu lahu* - 'I believed in or testified to his statements'. To understand it as *aqrartu* is closer than to understand it as *ṣaddaqtu*, although there is a difference between them which is quite clear. If someone speaks about something visible or invisible it is quite proper grammatically to say *sadaqta* - 'you are right' or *kadhabta* - 'you are wrong'. When, for example, someone says that the sky is above us, we may say, *sadaqta* - 'you

[379]See the discussion on the point in Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 7:290-291.

are right'. But we do not use the word *imān* except when the information is about something hidden from us. There is no harm in saying *ṣaddaqnāhu* - 'we testify that he is right', to one who says, "The sun is rising." But we would not say, *amana lahu* - 'we believe in him', for *īmān* has the sense of security and trust which are conceivable only in the context of information about something unseen. The question of trust does not arise except with regard to things hidden. This is why *amana lahu* has never been used in the Qur'ān or elsewhere in literature except in the context of things unseen.

Imān is not in contrast to *takdhīb* (to deny) but *taṣdīq* is. *Īmān*, however, is in contrast to *kufr*, which is not necessarily just *takdhīb*. If I say, "I know that you are truthful (*ṣādiq*), but I will not follow you; rather I will oppose you and hate you," I will be guilty of a major *kufr*. Hence it is clear that *imān* is not simply *taṣdīq*, nor is *kufr* simply *takdhīb*. Kufr is sometimes *takdhīb* but sometimes more than that, where it includes opposition and hostility. On the other hand, *īmān* is not only *taṣdīq*; it is more than that, wherein it includes assent (*muwāfaqah*), love (*mūwālāt*) and submission (*inqiyād*). *taṣdīq* does not give the whole meaning of *īmān*; and *islām* (submission) is only a part of *imān*.

If, however, *taṣdīq* is regarded as a synonym, it should be taken in a wider sense which includes action also. For this wider meaning of the term one can refer to a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him), "The eyes fornicate, and their fornication is to look; the ears fornicate, and their fornication is to listen... and the private parts confirm (*yuṣaddiqu*) it or deny (*yukadhdhibu*) it."[380] Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣrī, may Allah bless him, said, "*Īmān* is neither formal conformity nor vain expectation; it settles in the heart and is confirmed by action."[381] If it is *taṣdīq*, it is a particular kind of *taṣdīq*, as is the *ṣalāh*, as we discussed earlier. This is not a change in the wording. Allah has not commanded us to have faith in general, but to have a particular type of faith. He made its characteristics clear and He explained them. Therefore, the *taṣdīq* that is *īmān*, at the very least, is a type of general *taṣdīq* which cannot be invoked in every general or particular citing without some

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[380]Al-Bukhārī, 6243, 6612; Muslim, *Al-Qadr*, 2657; Abū Dāwūd, *Adh-Dhikah*, 2152; Aḥmad, 2:276. See also Muslim, 2657; Abū Dāwūd, 2153; Aḥmad, 2:317, 319, 343, 344, 349, 372, 379, 411, 535, 536.

[381]Ibn Abī Shaybah, Al-Muṣannaf, 11:22. Ibn Taymīyyah has also mentioned it in *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 7:294.

change in the exposition. *Īmān* in the words of the Qur'ān and Sunnah can be made up of both the general and the specific. Such is the case with *insān* (human being) which applies to a rational animal. Or, it could be referring to the complete *taṣdīq* that is in the heart, which necessitates what follows from the actions of the heart and the limbs. Those are the necessary acts of complete faith. Negation of the necessary acts is evidence of the non-existence of the necessitating cause.

We say that those necessary acts are sometimes included in the word itself and sometimes they are not. Or, it could be that the word is left according to its lexical meaning and that the Shari'ah adds something with respect to its ruling. Or, the Qur'ān and Sunnah use the word in a metaphorical sense, it then having a literal Shari'ah meaning and a metaphorical lexical meaning. Or, finally, it could be the case that the Shari'ah changed its meaning. These are some of the suggestions of those who follow this opinion.

It has also been pointed out that the words of the Prophet (peace be on him) fully support the latter view. He has made it absolutely clear that one is definitely not a *mū'min* who is said to believe in the Prophet (peace be on him) but does not profess it with his tongue though he is able, nor offers *ṣalāt*, nor fasts, nor loves Allah and His Prophet (peace be on him), nor fears Him, and, on the contrary, hates the Prophet (peace be on him) and fights against him. He has also made it clear that our happiness and position in the Hereafter depend upon our statement of the testimony of faith and our. sincerely believing in Allah's unity and acting accordingly. For example, he said, "*Imān* has more than seventy parts, and the highest is the confession that there is no god except Allah, and the lowest is removing a harmful object from the road;"[382] "Modesty is part of *imān*;"[383] "The most perfect *mū'min* is the one who is best in character;"[384] "Simplicity in dress is part of *īmān*."[385]

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[382]The wording of the *ḥadīth* in *ḥadīth* collections is a little different. *ḥadīth* 35 in Muslim and 9 in Al-Bukhārī begins with, "*Īmān* has more than sixty parts (*biḍ wa sittūn shu'bah*)." *ḥadīth* 4676 in Abū Dāwūd and 2614 in At-Tirmidhī and 57 in Ibn Mājah begins with, "*Īmān* has more than sixty or seventy chapters (*biḍ wa sittūn aw sab'ūn bāb*)." The reporter of this *ḥadīth* was not sure whether the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "more than sixty" or "more than seventy".

[383]This is the ending of the *ḥadīth* mentioned in the previous note.

[384]At-Tirmidhī, Ar-Riḍa, 1162; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 2682; Aḥmad, 2:250, 472, 527; Ad-Dārimī, *Ar-Riqāq*, 2:323; Ibn Ḥibban, 1211, 1926. It is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

[385]Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4118. The words in Abū Dāwūd, *At-Tarajjul*, 4161 are, "Do you hear? Do you hear? Truly, simplicity in dress (*al-badhadhah*) is part of *imān*."

If *īmān* has different parts and each part is called *īmān,* it follows that *ṣalāh* is *īmān, zakāh* and *ḥajj* are *īmān*, virtues such as modesty, trust, fear, and submission, even removing an obstacle from the way, are parts of *īmān*. Some of these parts are so basic, like the two *shahādahs*, that if you lose them you lose *īmān* completely; others are so marginal, such as removing an obstacle from the road, that if you lose them you do not lose *īmān*. Between the two, we have numerous parts of varying importance, some next only to the *shahādah*, and others only a little more important than removing an obstacle from the way. As the parts of *īmān* are *īmān,* similarly the parts of *kufr* are *kufr*. To judge according to the rules revealed by Allah is part of *īmān*, and to judge against them is *kufr*.

The Prophet (peace be on him) has said, "Whoever of you sees an evil, let him remove it with his hand; if he cannot, then let him use his tongue against it; if he cannot, then let him hate it in his heart; and know that this is the lowest degree of *īmān*."[386] This *ḥadīth* was recorded by Muslim, who also noted a variant that ends with the words, "...beyond that there is not even a particle of *īmān*."[387] At-Tirmidhī has recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever loves for Allah, hates for Allah, spends for Allah and withholds for Allah has perfect *īmān*."[388] This *ḥadīth* means – and true knowledge is with Allah – that love and hate are the foundations of the acts of the heart, and spending money or withholding it mark their perfection. Since money is at the other end from the soul, and the body lies between it and money, if one offers the first and the last to Allah, Allah is really his God in every respect. He is free from every form of *shirk*, from seeking anything other than Allah or pinning his hopes on it; he has the most perfect *īmān*. These and other similar *aḥādīth* fully prove that *īmān* varies in strength or weakness according to the deeds that one does.

Later will come the author's words about the Companions, "Loving them is the religion, faith and goodness, and hatred (*kufr*) for them is infidelity, hypocrisy and transgression," wherein he calls loving the Companions faith and hating them infidelity.

This is a *ḥasanḥadīth*.

[386]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 49; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Fitan*, 2173; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 4013; Abū Dāwūd, 1140, 4340; Aḥmad, 3:10, 20, 49, 53; An-Nasā'ī, 8:111-112.

[387]Muslim, 50; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 9784; Aḥmad, 1:458, 461, 462.

[388]At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2521; Aḥmad 3:438, 440; Abū Dāwūd, 4681. This is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

A strange response is that given by Abū Al-Mu'īn Al-Nasafī and others concerning the above *ḥadīth* stating the branches of faith. They say that the narrator said, "sixty or seventy parts." Thus the narrator was admitting that he was not certain about whether it was sixty or seventy and there is no doubt that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) did not have any doubt about it. Furthermore, that *ḥadīth* contradicts the Qur'ān; therefore, they criticize the forgetfulness of the narrator and claim he narrates something that goes against the Qur'ān. Look at that strange criticism. If the narrator was not sure if it was sixty or seventy, this does not mean that he was not being proficient. Furthermore, Al-Bukhārī records it clearly as sixty parts without any question or doubt. As for the criticism that it contradicts the Qur'ān, what is there in the Qur'ān that goes against it? In fact, the Qur'ān contains things that are in agreement with it. This type of criticism is simply the result of prejudice and blind following of others (and therefore trying anything to defend their positions).

It has also been pointed that *qawl* is of two kinds: *qawl* of the heart, which is faith (*i'tiqād*), and *qawl* of the tongue, which is uttering the testimony of Islam. Similarly, *'amal* (action) is of two kinds: actions of the heart, which are intention and sincerity, and actions of the body. When all four of these disappear, *imān* disappears completely. When faith (*taṣdīq*) of the heart disappears, the other three do not avail the person; *taṣdīq* is the condition of their authenticity and significance. If there is *taṣdīq* in the heart but the others are no longer there, this is the case where the dispute arises (whether such a person is still a Believer or not).

There is no doubt that the non-submission of the body implies lack of submission on the part of the heart, for if the heart submits, the body also surrenders and obeys; but if, on the other hand, the heart does not submit, there will be no assent (*taṣdīq*) that will be manifested in obedience. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "There is a lump of flesh in the body, which, when it is sound, the whole body is sound; but when it goes wrong, the whole body goes wrong as a result. Lo! it is the heart."[389] This means that if one's heart is good, his body (actions) will definitely be good. The opposite is not true. However, the point that when a part of *īmān* is lost, the whole of *īmān* is lost is true only in the sense that it does

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[389]Part of a *ḥadīth*, Al-Bukhārī, 52; Muslim, 1599; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 3984; Abū Dāwūd, 3329, 3330; An-Nasā'ī, 7:241; Aḥmad, 4:271, Ad-Dārimī, 2:245.

not remain intact, but not in the sense that it disappears completely; it is only impaired.

That faith (*īmān*) increases and decreases is supported by a number of Qur'ānic verses, prophetic *aḥādīth* and sayings of the Elders. Read, for example, the following verses: "And when His verses are recited to them they enhance their faith" [8:2]; "And Allah increases in guidance those who seek guidance (19:76]; "that the Believers may increase in faith" [74:31]; "It is He Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the Believers, that they add faith to their faith" [48:4]; and, "Those to whom people said: 'A great army is gathering against you, hence you must be afraid of them,' but it only increased their faith, and they said: 'For us Allah is sufficient,' and He is the best Disposer of affairs" [3:173].

Obviously, one cannot say that the increase mentioned in the last verse and the other verses means increase in the objects of faith. Is there anything in the statement, "A great army is gathering against you," which pertains to some additional aspect that one must believe in? Did the tranquility that Allah sent down into the hearts add to the objects of faith? Allah sent down to their hearts calmness upon their return from Hudaybīyyah in order to increase their tranquility and conviction. This is supported by the verses, "They (the hypocrites) were that day nearer to not having faith than to faith" [3:167], and the verse, "Whenever there comes down a *sūrah* some of them say: 'Which of you has had his faith increased by it?' Yes, those who believe, their faith is increased and they do rejoice. But as for those in whose hearts is disease, it only adds wickedness to their wickedness, and they die while they are disbelievers" [9:124-125]. (The former emphasizes the weakening of faith and the latter its enhancement.)

Abū Al-Layth As-Samarqandī, may Allah bless him, commenting on the last verse in his commentary, has quoted a *ḥadīth* reported through Muḥammad Ibn Al-Faḍl and Abū Al-Qāsim As-Sābādhī, from Faris Ibn Mardwayh, from Muḥammad Ibn Al-Faḍl Ibn Al-'Ābīd, from Yahyā Ibn 'Īsā, from Abū Muṭī, from Ḥammad Ibn Salāmah, from Abū Al-Muḥazzim, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, that a delegation from the tribe of Thaqīf came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) and said, "Messenger of Allah, does *imān* increase or decrease?" He replied, "No, *imān* is perfect in the heart. Any addition to it or deduction from it is infidelity (*kufr*)."[390] When our teacher, Shaykh Imad ad-Dīn Ibn

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[390]This is not a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, as Ibn Kathīr has correctly pointed out. See

Kathīr, may Allah bless him, was asked about this *ḥadīth*, he said, "The narrators between Abū Al-Layth and Abū Muṭī are not known; they have not been mentioned in the well-known biographical works. As for Abū Muṭī, his name is Al-Ḥakam Ibn Maslāmah Al-Balkhī. He has been dubbed weak by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Yahyā Ibn Mu'īn, 'Amr Ibn 'Alī Al-Fallas, Al-Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, Al-Nasā'ī, Abū Ḥātim Ar-Rāzī, Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibban Al-Bustī, Al-'Uqaylī, Ibn 'Adīy, Ad-Daraquṭnī, and others. As for Abū Al-Muḥazzim, who narrated the *ḥadīth* from Abū Hurayrah, his name has not been correctly written by the scribes. His name is Yazīd Ibn Sufyān; he is also not held reliable by many scholars. Shū'bah Ibn Al-Hajjāj avoided narrating from him, and Al-Nasā'ī says that he has been discarded. Shū'bah even implicates him in fabricating *aḥādīth*. He says, 'If he is given two cents he will fabricate seventy *aḥādīth*.'"[391]

The Prophet (peace be on him) said that women have a shortcoming in reason (*'aql*) and faith (*dīn*).[392] On another occasion, he (peace be on him) said, "None of you will be faithful unless I am dearer to him than his son, father and all mankind."[393] What he meant is that no one is perfect in faith unless he loves him more than anyone else. There are many more *aḥādīth* like this. You may also refer to the *ḥadīth* on the parts of *īmān* or intercession, or the *ḥadīth* which says that all those who have a particle of faith in their hearts will be taken out from Hell. In the face of all this evidence, how can one say that the faith of those in the heavens and those on the earth are all equal, or that they differ in some respects other than faith?

As for the sayings of the Companions, there are also many. Abū Ad-Dardā' said, "It is part of one's wisdom to guard one's faith against things that could weaken it. It is part of the deep understanding of a person that he knows if his *īmān* has increased

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Adh-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, 3:42; As-Suyūṭī, *Al-La'ālī al-Maṣnū'ah fī aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'ah* (Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifah, 3rd ed. 1401/181), 1:38; Ibn Ḥibban, *Al-Majrūhīn wa ad-Du'ā'fā* (ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Zayid; Ḥalab: Dār Al-Wa'ī, 1402/1982), 2:102-3; 'Alī Ibn Muḥammad Irāq, *Tanzīh ash-Shari'ah* (ed. 'Abdul-Wahhāb 'Abdul-Laṭīf; Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmīyyah, 1401/1981), vol. 1, p. 149.

[391]See, for example, Ibn 'Adīy, *Al-Kāmil fī Du'ā'fā ar-Rijāl* (Beirut: Dār Al-Fikr, 1404/ 1984), vol. 7, pp. 2721-2722.

[392]Muslim, 79, 80; Al-Bukhārī, 304, 1462; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4679; An-Nasā'ī, 3:187.

[393]Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Īmān*, 15; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 44; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Īmān*, 8:115; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 67; Aḥmad, 3:207, 275, 278.

or decreased." 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb used to say to his friends, "Come on, let us increase our faith," and then began remembering Allah the Almighty with them."[394] Ibn Mas'ūd used to say in his prayers, "O Allah! Increase our faith, certainty and understanding."[395] Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal would say to a man, "Let us sit down and strengthen our faith for a while."[396] This has also been reported of 'Abdullah Ibn Rawāhah. 'Āmmar Ibn Yāsir said, "He perfects his faith who practices three things: does justice to himself, spends in adversity, and greets everyone." This has been recorded by Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.[397] I need not quote more here; this much will suffice. And Allah is the Guide.

It has been said that *'amal* (action) has often been mentioned in conjunction with *īmān* – this implies that action is not included in the connotation of *īmān*. The first thing that should be noted in this connection is that *īmān* is mentioned in two ways. Sometimes it is mentioned alone, and neither any particular act nor Islam is mentioned along with it; and sometimes it is mentioned in association with a religious act or *islām*. In the first case, *īmān* necessarily includes action, for example, "Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in the heart" [7:2]; or "Only those are Believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted" [49:15]; "They only are true Believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger" [24:62]; or "If only they had believed in what has been revealed to him, they would never have taken them for friends and protectors" [5:84]. The following *ḥadīth* may also be cited, "No fornicator fornicates and he is a Believer;"[398] "You do not believe unless you love one another;"[399] "Whoever cheats us is not of us;" "Whoever carries weapons against us is not one of us."[400] Some people take the words "is not of us" to mean "is not like us." This is wrong. My Lord! How could that be? That would mean that one who simply

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[394]Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 11:26.

[395]Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, *ḥadīth* 8549. Al-Haythamī notes that the chain of this narration is good (*Majma' az-Zawā'id*, 10:1875).

[396]Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 11:26; Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilyah*, 1:235. The chain of this narration is good.

[397]Al-Bukhārī, *Ifshā as-Salām*, 1:82. See also Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 11:48.

[398]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

[399]Part of *aḥadīth*, Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 54; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 5193; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Isti'dhān*, 2688; Ibn Mājah, 68, 3692; Aḥmad, 2:391, 442, 495, 512.

[400]Part of a *ḥadīth*, Muslim, 101, 102; At-Tirmidhī, 1315; Abū Dāwūd, 3452; Ibn Mājah, 2224; Aḥmad, 2:217, 242.

does not cheat is like the Prophet (peace be on him) and his Companions.

In the second case, where any righteous action is associated with *imān*, the implication is that *īmān* is different from action, even though their predicate is the same. However, the difference is of varying degrees.[401] The strongest one is between two things which are not one, and of which neither is a part of the other or has anything in common with the other, or implies it. This difference exists, for example, between the things which have been conjoined in the verse, "He created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light" [6:1]; or the verse, "He sent down the Torah and the Gospel" [3:3]. This is the usual meaning of difference. Next to it is the difference which is found in things that imply each other. This is illustrated in the following verse, "And cover not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth when you know" [2:42]; and "Obey Allah and obey the Prophet" [5:95]. The third difference is where one is in conjunction with the other, as in the verses, "Be guardians of your prayers, and of the midmost prayer" [2:238]; "Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and His messengers and to Gabriel and Michael..." [2:98]; or "And remember We took from the prophets their covenant and from you" [33:7].

This difference has been interpreted in several ways. One is that the second thing is included in the first and is, therefore, mentioned twice. Second and third are that the second is not included in the first in the particular case mentioned, even though it is in principle included in the first when stated alone. People have interpreted the phrase, *al-fuqarā wa al-masākīn* (the poor and the needy) [9:60] and other phrases in this manner. It is obvious that the meaning will differ if we take the two words together and if we take them separately. The fourth difference is found when a thing is conjoined with itself with respect to two of its different qualities or properties. An example is, "The Forgiver of sin and the Acceptor of repentance" [40:3]. A poet has said, "He found her words false and untrue." This is a case of conjoining synonyms. Some people think that the same is the case in some places in the Qur'ān, such as in the verse, "To each among you We have prescribed a *shari'ah* and a *minhāj*, (law and way)" [5:51]. For a detailed discussion on this point, see the relevant works.

In light of this analysis we will look at the use of the word *imān* in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. When it is used by itself it means

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[401] Ibn Taymīyyah has discussed the various forms of difference in *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 7:172-181.

what the words *birr* (righteousness), *taqwā* (piety), *dīn* (religion) or *dīn al-Islām* (religion of Islam) mean. It has been reported that the background of verse 2:177 is that people asked, "What is *īmān*?" Answering this question, it was revealed, "It is not righteousness (*birr*) that you turn your faces towards East or West; righteousness is to believe in Allah and the Last Day, the angels, the books and the messengers; to spend of your substance out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of servants; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing" [2:177].

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr narrated from Isḥāq Ibn Ibrahim, from 'Abdullah Ibn Yazīd Al-Muqrī and Al-Malā'ī, from Al-Man'udī through Al-Qāsim, that a man came to Abū Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, and asked, "What is *īmān*?" He recited the same verse, "It is not righteousness..." [2:177]. The man said, "I did not ask you about that." Abū Dharr said, "A man came to the Prophet (peace be on him) and asked the same question you asked me, and the Prophet (peace be on him) recited to him the same verse I have recited to you. Thereupon, the man said to the Prophet (peace be on him) what you said to me. When the Prophet (peace be on him) saw that he was not satisfied, he said, 'A believer (*mū'min*) is one who feels happy when he does good and hopes to be rewarded for it, and who feels unhappy when he does evil and is afraid that he may be punished for it.'"[402] A number of Elders have responded in the same way when they were asked about *īmān*.

It has been recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet (peace be on him) said to the delegation from the 'Abdul-Qays tribe visiting him, "I enjoin upon you to believe in none other than Allah. Do you know what faith in Allah means? It is to witness that there is no god besides Allah, the one and the only God, without a partner. It is to

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[402]The chain of this *ḥadīth* is weak. However, its meaning is supported by a *ḥadīth* recorded by Al-Ḥakīm on the authority of Abū Umāmah: A man asked the Prophet (peace be on him), "What is *imān*?" He replied, "If you feel happy when you do good, and feel unhappy when you do evil, then you are a Believer." the man further asked, "Messenger of Allah, what is sin?" He replied, "When you feel uneasy over a thing, leave it." [See Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:14; Al-Ḥakīm has claimed that the *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ* and Adh-Dhahabī has endorsed his view).

establish *ṣalāh*, pay *zakāh* and hand over (to us) a fifth of booty."[403] Obviously the Prophet (peace be on him) did not mean by that that these acts could be called *īmān* in Allah without faith in Him in the heart. On several occasions he emphasized the necessity of faith in the heart. It is, therefore, certain that *īmān* is these acts along with faith in the heart.

What greater proof than the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him) can there be to show that actions are included as part of faith? He defined *īmān* in terms of actions and did not mention conviction (*taṣdīq*) of the heart, that is because it is well known that actions have no value if rejection is in the heart.

In the *Musnad*, we have a *ḥadīth* reported by Anas that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "*Islām* is visible and *īmān* is (hidden) in the heart."[404] This *ḥadīth* differentiates between *īmān* and *islām*. This point is further supported by the *ḥadīth* which says that Gabriel came to the Prophet (peace be on him) one day and questioned him about *islām*, *īmān* and *iḥsān*. The Prophet (peace be on him) answered his questions and then said to the Companions around him that it was Gabriel who had come to teach them their religion (*dīn*). This means that according to the Prophet (peace be on him) *dīn* is *islām*, *īmān* and *iḥsān*. There are, therefore, three grades of people in the religion. There are those who are muslim, then above them *mū'min*, and at the top muhsin. *Īmān* definitively includes all that comes under *islām*, and *iḥsān* incudes all that comes under Islam and *īmān*. It does not mean that there could be *iḥsān* without *imān*. Allah has said, "Then We have given the Book for inheritance to such of Our servants as We have chosen. But there are among them some who wrong their own souls; some who follow a middle course; and some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds" [35:32]. Both those in the middle and the front-runners will enter Paradise without undergoing any punishment. The wrongdoers have exposed themselves to the threatened punishment of Allah according to Allah's warning.[405] This is the destiny of those who have faith in the heart and submit externally to the Lord, but fail to fulfill the internal demands of *īmān,* and therefore expose themselves to His chastisement.

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[403] Al-Bukhārī, 53, 87, 523, 1398, 3095; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 17; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2611; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Ashribah*, 3692; An-Nasā'ī. 8:323; Aḥmad, 1:278.

[404] Aḥmad, 3:135. But the chain of the *ḥadīth* is weak, as one of its transmitters, 'Alī Ibn Man'adah had a weak memory.

[405] See also Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 7:485f.

Of the three terms, *islām*, *īmān* and *iḥsān*, the one that is most comprehensive is *iḥsān*, but its practitioners are the fewest. Next comes *īmān*; it is more comprehensive than *islām*, but its practitioners are fewer than muslims. The muhsins are fewer than the *mū'mins*, and the *mū'mins* are fewer than the muslims. The relation between them is like the relation between *riṣalāh* (messengerhood) and *nūbuwwah* (prophethood). *Risālah* implies *nūbūwwah*, and has a wider connotation, but its bearers are fewer than those of *nūbuwwah*. Every messenger is a prophet, but not vice-versa.

What does *islām* mean? There are three different views on the subject.[406] Some people equate it with (professing) the *kalimah*. Others define it as the Prophet (peace be on him) did when he was asked about *islām* and *imān*. He defined *islām* in terms of external acts of obedience, and defined *īmān* as faith in the five basic principles. A third group makes *islām* synonymous with *imān*, and argues from the *ḥadīth*, "Islam is to witness that there is no god but Allah, to establish *ṣalāh* and...."[407] They take *islām* in the sense of the principles of Islam, which is not the point under discussion here. On the one hand, they take *imān* to mean the assent (*taṣdīq*) of the heart. On the other hand, they equate *islām* with *īmān,* from which it follows that *islām* is the *taṣdīq* of the heart. This is not supported by any lexicographer. They have always defined *islām* as submission and obedience. The Prophet has said, "O Allah, to You I submit (*aslāmtu*), and in You I put my faith (*amantu*)."[408] He has explained *islām* in terms of external actions, and *imān* in terms of faith in five fundamentals. Hence if one mentions them together one must explain them as the Prophet (peace be on him) did.

However, if *īmān* is mentioned separately it will include *islām*, and if *islām* is mentioned separately then the muslim has to be a *mū'min*. There is no disagreement on this point. But whether a Muslim should be called *mū'min* or not, there are different opinions, as we have said earlier.

Does *islām* imply *īmān*? On this question, too, opinions differ. Allah has promised Paradise and relief from the Fire on the condition that one has *īmān*. He has said, "Behold! verily on the

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406 Ibid, 7:360.
407 Muslim, 8; Abū Dāwūd, 4695; An-Nasā'ī, 8:97-101; Ibn Mājah, 63.
408 Part of a *ḥadīth*, Al-Bukhārī, 1120, 6317; Muslim, *Ṣalāt al-Musafirīn*, 769; An-Nasā'ī, 3:209-210; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1355; Aḥmad, 1:298, 308, 358.

friends of Allah there is no fear nor will they grieve – those who believe (*amanū*) and constantly guard against evil" [11:62-63]; and "Be you foremost in seeking forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden (of Bliss) the width whereof is the width of Heaven and the earth, prepared for those who believe (*amanū*) in Allah and His messengers" [57:21]. But nowhere has He made entry into Paradise conditional on *islām*, even though He has enjoined it and promulgated it as the only religion acceptable to Him, and sent every prophet with it. "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam," He has said "never will it be accepted of him" [3:85].

To conclude: When *islām* and *īmān* are mentioned together it is different from the case when one is mentioned without the other. Islam is to *īmān* as the two testimonies - witnessing to Muḥammad's prophecy in relation to witnessing to Allah's unity - are to each other. In essence, these two witnesses are two different things, though the idea and the effects of the one are associated with the idea and the effects of the other, as if they were one thing. The same is the case with *islām* and *īmān*. No one can have *imān* without *islām*, or *islām* without *īmān*. One has to have *islām* to some extent in order to prove his *īmān*, just as one has to have *īmān* in order to authenticate one's *islām*.

There are numerous instances in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah as well as in language, which demonstrate the point that things when conjoined mean one thing and when used separately mean a different thing. Take, for example, the terms *kufr* and nifaq. When *kufr* is mentioned separately and the context is, for example, of punishment in the Hereafter, the *munāfiq* (hypocrite) is bracketed with the *kāfir* (infidel). The Qur'ān says, "If anyone rejects faith (*yakfur bi al-īmān*), his work is fruitless, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers" [5:6]. We can cite many other verses. The point we are making is that when they are both mentioned together, *kāfir* means one who openly declares his *kufr* (not to have faith) and the *munafiq* (hypocrite) is one who asserts faith with his tongue but denies it in his heart. The same is true for other pairs of words, like *birr* (righteousness) and *taqwā* (piety), *ithm* (sin) and *'udwan* (transgression), *tawbah* (repentance) and *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness), *faqīr* (needy) and *miskīn* (poor), and so on.

The difference between *islām* and *īmān* is attested to by the verse, "The desert Arabs say: 'We believe (*amannā*).' Say: You do not have faith (*lam tu'minu*), but say: 'We have submitted (*aslāmnā*) to Allah.' The faith has not entered your heart..." [49:14]. Some people have observed that the words "we have submitted" (*aslāmnā*)

simply mean that they have surrendered externally although in reality they are hypocrites (*munāfiq*). This is one interpretation. The other interpretation, which is generally accepted and is stronger, is that they are not hypocrites, although complete faith has been denied to them in the same sense in which it has been denied to a murderer, a fornicator, a robber and a cheat. The context of the verse also supports this interpretation. From the beginning of the *sūrah* up to this verse, the discussion is focused on evil acts and the consequences which some of the those who commit them will have to face. Nowhere have the hypocrites been mentioned. Again, just after the words under discussion, Allah has said, "But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not belittle aught of your deeds." Obviously, were they hypocrites, their deeds will not be of any benefit to them. He has further said, "Only those are Believers (*mū'minūn*) who believed in Allah and His Messenger and have never since doubted" [49:15]. That is, true and perfect Believers have these qualities but not the desert Arabs, whose faith is not perfect.

A further argument is that Allah has allowed their claim, "we have submitted" (*aslāmnā*). But had they been hypocrites He would not have allowed this; on the contrary, He would have disallowed it. Certainly He would have denied the epithet *muslim*, as he had denied the epithet *mū'min*. He has only asked them not to impress on the Prophet (peace be on him) that they are doing him a favor by embracing Islam (49:16]. This is another recognition of their *islām*, for if their *islām* had not been genuine, they would have been told that they were not Muslims but imposters, just as the hypocrites were told that they were not sincere in their witness when they witnessed that Muḥammad, peace be upon him, was the Messenger of Allah (63:1]. However, Allah knows best.

This discussion, I hope, completely refutes the view that *īmān* and *islām* are synonymous, as it repudiates the objection that if *islām* referred to external acts, it would be possible to accept nothing other than it, not even the *īmān* of a sincere person. This is obviously false. We have cited the two testimonies (*shahādatān*) and many other things, and established the fact that what they mean when mentioned separately is different from what they mean when mentioned jointly. Look, for example, at the first *shahādah*. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I have been commanded to fight people until they say: There is no god except Allah." Obviously, if they say "There is no god except Allah," and deny the messengership of Muḥammad, they will not save themselves from war; they will have to say, "there is no god except Allah" in the

proper way, which is, they will have to witness to Muḥammad's messengership along with Allah's unity. Similarly, they will not be witnessing to the messengership of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, unless they witness that all that he has brought is true. This will imply witnessing to Allah's unity. On the other hand, if the witness that Allah is one is joined with the witness that Muḥammad is His messenger, the first witness will be a witness to Allah's unity and the second to Muḥammad's messengership. Similarly, when *islām* and *īmān* are mentioned together, they mean different things. An example is the verse, "Verily the Muslim men and women, the *mū'min* men and women" [33:35]. And the Prophet's words, "O Allah, to You I have submitted and in You I believe."[409] the meaning of one is different from the meaning of the other. And the Prophet's words, "*Islām* is visible and *īmān* is (hidden) in the heart."[410] If just one is mentioned, it includes the meaning of the other, as in the case of *faqīr* (poor) and *miskīn* (pauper) and other terms. When *faqīr* and *miskīn* are used together, they refer to different things; when used separately, they refer to the same thing. Does anyone say about Allah's words, "The expiation of the oath is the feeding of ten of the needy..." [5:89] that one may give to one who has little as opposed to one who has nothing, or the reverse? Similar is the case with the verse, "If you publish your almsgiving, it is well, but if you hide it and give it to the poor..." [2:271].

This also refutes the machinations of those who ask what the ruling is in this world and the next for one who believes but does not submit or who submits but does not believe. If someone can affirm a ruling for one of them that is not confirmed for the other, it is clear that his statement is invalid and incorrect.

You can answer such a person by saying that you equate muslim with *mū'min* while Allah says, "Verily the Muslim men and women, the *mū'min* men and women" [33:35]. Allah has made them two different things. To a person who testified to the *īmān* of his friend, the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "You should rather say that he is a *muslim*," and he repeated the words three times.[411] This means that he affirmed the *islām* of the person, but refrained from affirming his *īmān*. It is, therefore, plain that whoever equates the two opposes the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Our duty is that whenever we differ on any point we should turn to Allah and the Prophet

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[409]This *ḥadīth* was discussed earlier.

[410]Discussed earlier; it is weak.

[411]Al-Bukhārī, 27, 1478; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 150; Aḥmad, 1:182.

(peace be on him). Some texts might appear to be conflicting, but in reality they are not; they can be easily reconciled with each other, by the grace of Allah.

Those who consider *īmān* and Islam to be synonymous argue from the verse, "Then We evacuated those of the Believers (*mū'minūn*) who were there, but We found not but one house inhabited by Muslims" [51:35-36]. This inference is not correct, for the people who were evacuated were muslim and *mū'min*, and if these epithets have been mentioned together it does not mean that they are synonymous.

The objections that we have mentioned were not advanced by Abū Ḥanīfah, although they have been advanced by his followers. He himself never approved of them. Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī has reported that Ḥammad Ibn Zayd recited to Abū Ḥanīfah the *ḥadīth* which says that the Prophet (peace be on him) was asked which Islam was better (to the end),[412] and he added, "Don't you see that the Prophet (peace be on him) was asked which Islam was better, and in reply he said *īmān* instead of *islām*, and then mentioned *hijrah* (migration in the way of Allah), and *jihād*, as part of *īmān*." Abū Ḥanīfah kept silent on this, but one of his students urged him to give a reply. He said, "What should I say? Don't you see that Ḥammad is quoting the Prophet, peace be upon him?"

From the fruits of the above difference of opinion is the question of saying, "I am a Believer, God willing." Regarding this statement, they are three opinions – two extremes and one in the middle. Some say that one must say the words, "God willing (*insha' Allah*)". Others say that it is forbidden to make such a statement. Other say it is allowed in some instances and prohibited in others. That is the soundest of the three opinions.

Those who say it is obligatory to say "God willing" have two stances. First, faith is what a person dies upon. A person is a Believer or a disbeliever in Allah's sight according to his condition at death. Because of Allah's foreknowledge, He knows in what state the person will die. What occurs before that is of no importance. So they say that the faith that is followed by infidelity is, in fact, no faith at all. It is like the prayer that is invalidated before it is finished or the fast of a person who breaks his fast before sunset. The Kalabīyyah and others follow this argument. According to them,

[412]For the *ḥadīth* see Abdur-Razzāq, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 20107; Aḥmad, 4:114. Al-Haythamī observes that the *ḥadīth* has also been recorded by At-Ṭabarānī and that its transmitters are reliable (*Majmū' az-Zawā'id*, 1:59).

Allah always loved those disbelievers that He knew would die as Believers. The Companions, for example, were always beloved to Allah even before their conversions to Islam. Iblīs and all of those who apostasized were always hated by Allah, even before their infidelity. This is not the statement of the Elders. Those of them who did say that one should say "God willing" did not use such an argument; it is clearly wrong. Allah says, "Say: If you truly love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you" [3:31]. Here He is stating that He will love them if they follow the Messenger. Hence, following the Messenger is a condition for His love. And the conditional result must come after the condition. There is other evidence as well.

A group of people went to an extreme on this point. They would begin to say "God willing" for good deeds. They would say, "I prayed, God willing," and so on, meaning it was accepted. Some of them even started saying it for everything. One would say, "This is an article of clothing, God willing," "This is a rope, God willing." If you tell them, "There is no doubt about that (being a rope)," They would say, "Yes, that is true. But if Allah wills to change it, He will change it."

Their second point is that absolute faith requires the servant to be doing everything Allah commands and avoiding everything He forbids. If a person says, "I am a Believer," then, in that sense, he is testifying about himself that he is one of the most pious people, who is doing everything he is commanded and abstaining from everything forbidden. He is saying he is from the devoted servants who are close to Allah. This is self-sanctification if that testimony is true. But he must also testify that he will be of Paradise if he dies in that state.

This was the stance of the majority of the Elders who used to include the words "God willing" when stating they were Believers. They would also permit not stating it in a different meaning, as we will mention, God willing. They also stood for the permissibility of saying "God willing" about something concerning which there is no doubt, based on the verse, "You will indeed enter the Inviolable Place of Worship, if Allah wills, secure" [48:27]. Similarly, when the Prophet (peace be on him) stopped in front of a graveyard, he said, "We, God willing, will join you."[413] He also said, "I hope to

[413]Muslim, 249; Abū Dāwūd, 3237; Ibn Mājah, 4306; Aḥmad, 2:300, 375, 408; An-Nasā'ī, 1:94-95.

be the most fearful of Allah of all of you."[414] There are other examples also.

Those who forbid such a statement are all those who say that *imān* is one entity. They will say, "I know that I am a Believer in the same way that I know that I made the testimony. My statement, 'I am a Believer,' is the same as my statement, 'I am a Muslim.' the one who says, 'God willing' concerning his faith then has a doubt about it." They call such people doubters. They respond to the verse, "You will indeed enter the Inviolable Place of Worship, if Allah wills, secure" [48:27], by saying that it refers to the feeling of security or fear. As for entering the House, there is no doubt about it. Or they say that all or some of them will enter it, as Allah knows that some of them will die.

There is some question, though, about those two responses. They end up in the position that they want to flee from. As for security or fear, Allah states that they will enter in security, and He knows that. Therefore, there is no doubt about entering or about them being secure upon doing so. Nor is there any question about some or all of them entering the House because Allah knows which ones will do so, again, without any doubt. The statement, "God willing," here is emphasis that they will enter, like the person who says about something he will definitely do: "By Allah, I will do it, God willing." Here he does not say "God willing" out of any doubt but out of desire and resolve. But, in that case, one who does not fulfill what he stated does not break his oath because he did not clearly state he would do it.

There is another response that is fairly acceptable. Allah made such a statement to teach us how to make statements about things that will happen in the future. But there is some question about whether that is what is meant by the verse, as the context does not point to it, but it may be considered something the verse simply alludes to.

Az-Zamakhsharī responds with two other answers that are false. The first is that the angel or the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said it and the Qur'ān confirmed it.

Those who allow the saying of "God willing" as well as not saying it have the best evidence from the two groups. The best is the middle one. If the one who says "God willing" has some doubt about his *imān*, it is not allowed to say it. This is agreed upon. But if he means that he is a Believer from those Believers that Allah has

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[414]Muslim, 1110; Abū Dāwūd, 2389; Mālik, 1:289; Aḥmad, 6:67, 156, 245.

described in the verses, "They only are (true) Believers whose hearts feel fear when Allah is mentioned, and when the revelations of Allah are recited unto them they increase their faith, and who trust in their Lord, who establish worship and spend of what We have bestowed on them. Those are they who are in truth Believers, for them are grades (of honor) with their Lord, and pardon, and a bountiful provision" [8:2-4], or in the verse, "The true Believers are those only who believe in Allah and His Messenger and afterward doubt not, but strive with their wealth and their lives for the cause of Allah. Such are the sincere" [49:15], then in that case, saying "God willing" is permissible. Similarly, one who says "God willing," meaning that he does not know what his end will be, or in reference to a command of Allah, without any doubt about his faith, then such a statement is permissible. This is, as you can see, a strong position.

The author then says, "All that the Prophet (peace be on him) is authentically known to have said or enjoined is true." This is to refute the view of the Jahmīyyah, the negators (*mu'aṭṭilah*) of divine attributes, the Mu'tazilah, and the Rāfiḍah, who divide informative reports into *mutawātir* (reported by many people at every stage of transmission) and *āḥād* (non-*mutawātir*) reports and then say that, although the *mutawātir* reports are absolutely authentic, they may not be definitive with respect to what they are stating, since a text by itself does not bring about certainty. Even the Qur'ānic statements about Allah's attributes, they say, do not provide that guarantee. As for *āḥād* reports, they do not yield any knowledge; neither its transmitting chain (*isnād*), nor its text can be the basis of any argument. They close on themselves the door to knowledge of Allah, His names, attributes and acts that come from the Prophet (peace be on him), and they live on nothing but their whims and fancies, which they love to call rational truths and demonstrative proofs. In fact, they have what, in the words of the Qur'ān, is "like a mirage in sandy deserts which the man parched with thirst mistakes for water, until when he comes up to it he finds it to be nothing and finds Allah with him Who will pay him his account. And Allah is swift in taking account. Or it is like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean overwhelmed with billow topped by billow, topped by (dark) clouds: depths of darkness one above another. If a man stretches out his hand he can hardly see it! For any to whom Allah gives not light there is no light" [24:39-40].

It is amazing how they exalt their reason over revelation and disregard the Qur'ān. Consequently they move away from divine guidance. On the other hand, they hardly get at the true rational propositions inherent in the nature of man, or implied in the

prophetic texts. Had they sought guidance in revelation they would have arrived at rational propositions that agree with natural intuitions.

These heretics interpret scriptural texts in the light of their heresies and what they claim to be rational ideas. Whatever agrees with them, they call clear and unequivocal (*muḥkam*), and they accept it; and whatever does not agree with what they believe in, they call equivocal (*mutashabih*), and they reject it. They say either that Allah alone knows what it means, or they misinterpret it and claim that what they say is the correct interpretation. This is the reason the Ahl as-Sunnah denounce them vehemently.

The Ahl as-Sunnah do not neglect any authentic text, or pit against it any rationalistic proposition or the words of any person, whoever he may be, as the author has stated. Al-Bukhārī narrates that Al-Ḥumaydī was with Ash-Shāfi'ī when a man came and asked his opinion in a particular matter. Ash-Shāfi'ī told him the verdict which the Prophet (peace be on him) had given on that matter. The man insisted on knowing Ash-Shāfi'ī's own view. He then said, "Glory is for Allah alone. Do you think I am of those who goes to a church or to a synagogue or wears a chord? I am telling you the verdict of the Prophet (peace be on him) and you ask for my view?!"[415] This is not a stray instance; there are many such statements that have come down from the Elders. Furthermore, Allah has said, "It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger, to have any option about their decision" [33:36].

An *āḥād ḥadīth*, when accepted, believed in and acted upon by the *ummah* produces certain knowledge according to the majority of scholars of all the ages.[416] It is treated as a type of *mutawātir ḥadīth*. There is no difference among the Elders on this point. Examples of this kind of *ḥadīth* are many. One is reported by 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb. Its opening words are, "Actions will be judged according to their motives."[417] Another which is reported by Ibn 'Umar says, "The Prophet prohibited the sale of clientage as well as its donation."[418] A third, which is reported by Abū Hurayrah, says, "A

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[415]See Abū Nu'aym, Ḥilyat al-Awliya', 9:106; Al-Bayhaqī, *Manāqib Ash-Shafi'ī*, 1:474.

[416]For a discussion of this point see Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Mukhtaṣar as-Sawā'iq al-Mursalah* 2:372-433.

[417]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

[418]Al-Bukhārī, 2535, 6756; Muslim, *Al-'Itq*, 1506; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Farā'id*, 2919; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Buyu'*, 1236; An-Nasā'ī, 7:306; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Farā'id*, 2747; Ad-

woman is not to be married along with her paternal or maternal aunt."[419] A fourth *ḥadīth* says, "All those marriages which are forbidden because of blood relations are also forbidden on the ground of fostering."[420] There are many more of this nature. These *aḥādīth* carry the same weight as the news about the change of *qiblah*, which was given by one man to the people praying at the Qubā' Mosque, and according to which they turned to the new *qiblah*, the Ka'bah.[421]

The Prophet used to communicate messages through one man, or send letters through a messenger, but never did anyone say that he would not accept the message because it was passed on by only one man. Allah has said, "It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to proclaim it over all religions" [9:33]. This requires that He should guard and preserve His revelations and messages so that people may know them. This also explains why Allah denounces and exposes those who deny the messenger during his lifetime or after his death. Sufyān Ibn 'Uyanah said, "Allah never fails to expose one who lies in a *ḥadīth*." 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak said, "If anyone tries to lie in a *ḥadīth* he is exposed and declared a liar."

Āḥād reports may be correct or incorrect. But distinguishing between a correct and an incorrect report or a true and false report is not possible for everyone. The only scholars who can do that are those who have devoted themselves to the scrutiny of *ḥadīth* and its narrators, who are aware of their lives and views, and know how careful they were in narration. They never allow anybody to falsely ascribe a word to the Prophet (peace be on him) even though it may cost their lives, nor do they allow any liberty to themselves. They have passed on the religion to us as accurately as they got it; they are guardians of Islam and defenders of *īmān*. They are keen critics of reports and true judges of *aḥādīth*; whoever knows them and their veracity, honesty and piety, and the care they take in reporting will be convinced that what they have reported is knowledge. And when

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Dārimī, 2:398; Aḥmad, 2:9, 79, 107.

[419]Al-Bukhārī, 5109, 5110; Muslim, *An-Nikāḥ*, 1408; At-Tirmidhī, *An-Nikāḥ*, 1126; Abū Dāwūd, *An-Nikāḥ*, 2065; An-Nasā'ī, 6:96, 97; Aḥmad, 2:229, 423, 426, 432.

[420]Al-Bukhārī, 2645, 5100; Ibn Mājah, 1938; An-Nasā'ī, 6:100; Aḥmad, 1:275, 339. With a somewhat different wording the *ḥadīth* is in Muslim, 1444, 1447; Al-Bukhārī, 2646, 3105; Abū Dāwūd, 2055; At-Tirmidhī, 1146, 1147; An-Nasā'ī, 6:96; Ad-Dārimī, 2:156; Aḥmad, 6:51, 66, 72, 102, 178.

[421]Al-Bukhārī, 403, 4488, 4490; Muslim, *Al-Masājid*, 526; An-Nasā'ī, 2:61, Ad-Dārimī, 1:281; Aḥmad, 2:16, 113.

one acquaints oneself with their work one will realize that the *ḥadīth* scholars have a profound insight into the life, work and history of the Prophet (peace be on him) which is not available to anyone else, not even a part thereof. This is as true as the fact that no one is more informed on the lives and ideas of Sībawayh and Khalīl than the philologists, or of Hippocrates and Galen than the physicians. Obviously, if you ask a grocer about a scent or a perfumer about clothes nothing will be more foolish of you.

Those who negate the attributes of Allah use the verse, "There is nothing like unto Him" [42:11] as proof to reject a number of authentic *aḥādīth*. Whenever they come across *aḥādīth* which go against their principles or the ideas they have derived from reason or imagination, they reject them on the plea that they conflict with the verse, "There is nothing like Him." This is an act of deception from them; it fools those whose hearts are even blinder than theirs and is a twisting of the meaning of the verse.

They interpret the *aḥādīth* on divine attributes in a sense which was meant neither by Allah nor His Messenger (peace be on him), nor as understood by the leading scholars of Islam. First they understand the attributes on the pattern of human attributes and then negate them arguing from the verse, "There is nothing like unto Him" [42:11]. In this way, they misinterpret the *aḥādīth* as well as the Qur'ān. They write books on this principle and project it as the most fundamental principle of the religion that Allah has revealed. They read much of the Qur'ān and say that its meaning is known only to Allah, without even pondering the explanation given to it by the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) and stated as being the meaning that Allah meant.

Before them, the People of the Book committed the same mistakes. Allah has condemned them so that we may guard ourselves against such characteristics. He has said, "Can you entertain the hope that they will believe in you – seeing that a party of them heard the words of Allah and perverted it knowingly after they understood it... There are among them illiterates who know not the Book, but only their desires (*amanī*), and they do nothing but conjecture" [2:75-78]. That is, they know nothing but amanī, which means that they only recite the Book and do not try to understand it. Allah has further said, "Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands, and then say: 'This is from Allah,' to traffic with it for a miserable price. Woe to them for what their hands write, and for the gain they make thereby" [2:79]. Thus He has denounced them for ascribing to Him what they write by themselves and for securing some gains through it. Both of these are evil: to attribute to

Allah what He has not said, and to earn in this way some money or some position in the world. May Allah save us from slips in statements and actions by His grace and generosity.

The author stated, "All that the Prophet (peace be on him) is known to have enjoined or stated is true." What has come down from the Prophet (peace be on him) by authentic means is of two kinds: What he himself decreed, and what he said elucidating and elaborating a law revealed by Allah in His Book. Both are truth that must be obeyed.

The author also said, "With regard to the essence of *īmān* all the Believers are equal. They differ only in respect to the strength of *īmān,* abstention from evil, and pursuit of good." In some manuscripts the words are "with respect to fearing Allah and observing piety" instead of "the strength of *īmān*". The first wording means that although the Believers are one in the essence of faith (*taṣdīq*) they differ with respect to its (*taṣdīq*'s) strength or weakness. We have said elsewhere that people have strong or weak *īmān* just as they have strong or weak eyesight. The second wording says that the Believers differ with respect to the acts of their heart even though they are one with respect to affirmation (*taṣdīq*). However, the first wording is clearly preferable. Allah knows best what is correct.

(72) All Believers are friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah, the All-Merciful.

Allah has said, "Behold! verily on the friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah there is no fear, nor will they grieve – those who believe and have fear of Allah and obey Him" [10:62-63]. *Walī* (singular of *awliyā'*) is from *walāyah* which is the opposite of *'adāwah*, or enmity. Ḥamzah reads the verse, "You have no duty to protect them (*walayatihim*) until they leave their homes" [8:72] as *wilayatihim* with a *kasrah* on the *wāw*, while everyone else reads it with a *fatḥa* over the *wāw*. Some say that these are simply two different dialects with the same meaning. Others say that with the *fatḥa* it connotes a duty to support them, while with the *kasrah* it means authority over them. Az-Zujāj, an Arabic expert, said that it is permissible to recite it with a *kasrah* as one people supporting another is a class of action and everything of that nature can be recited with a *kasrah*, such as *khiyāṭah* (sewing), and so on.

The Believers are the friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah, and Allah is their Protector (Walī). He has said, "Allah is the Protector (Walī) of those who have faith. From the depths of darkness, He will lead

them forth into light. But of those who reject faith, their patrons are the evil ones; from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness" [2:257]. Allah has also said, "That it is because Allah is Patron of those who believe, and because the disbelievers have no patron" [47:11]. The Believers are supporters and patrons one of another. Allah has said, "The Believers, men and women, are supporters, one of another" [9:71]. "Those who believed and adopted exile and fought for the faith with their property and their persons in the cause of Allah, as well as those who gave them asylum and aid are all friends and supporters, one of another. And to those who believed but did not migrate, you owe no duty of protection (walāyah) to them until they migrate..." [8:72]. And "Your real friends are Allah, His Messenger and the Believers – those who establish regular prayers and regular charity (*zakāh*) and bow down humbly (in worship). As for those who turn (for friendship) to Allah, His messenger and the Believers – it is the party of Allah that must certainly triumph" [5:58-59].

These verses all prove that the Believers are friends and supporters of each other, that they are friends of Allah, and that Allah is their Friend and Protector. He takes those of His servants who believe in Him into His protection and loves them, and they love Him. He is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. If anyone turns against His friends, he declares war against them. This *walāyah*, friendship, support and protection is simply a favor and mercy that He bestows upon them, completely unlike the *walāyah* of a human being with another that is done due to need. He has said, "Say: Praise be to Allah, Who begets no son, and has no partner in (His) dominion, nor needs He any to protect Him from humiliation. You should magnify Him for His greatness and glory" [19:11]. Allah does not take friends out of any weakness on his part; He has all the power at His command. Others, on the contrary, whether kings or commoners, take friends because they are weak or because they need them for help and assistance.

Walāyah is similar to *īmān* in the author's view. He thinks that with regard to the essence of *walāyah* all Believers are equal. They differ only in its degree: some are greater *walī* (patrons) of Allah than others. Perfect *walāyah* is for those Believers who are pious (*muttaqī*), fearful of Allah, who eschew evil and obey Him, as He has said, "Behold! Verily on the friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah there is no fear, nor will they grieve – those who believe, fear Allah, eschew evil and constantly obey Him; for them are glad tidings in the life of the present and in the Hereafter" [10:62-64]. The phrase, "those who believe, fear Allah, eschew evil and constantly obey Him" is

either a description of those who are Allah's friends, or a substitute clause for it, or it is assumed to be words of praise, or it is *marfu'* (indicative) for "they", or it is a second predicate of the sentence.

Allah's *walāyah* is, therefore, for those who have faith and observe piety. They will have the favor of Allah which has been promised in the three verses mentioned above. *Walāyah* is secured by complying with the will of Allah, the Friend and the Protector (Walī), in all that He likes or dislikes. It is not secured by fasting a lot, offering a number of prayers, wearing ragged clothes or doing spiritual exercises. Some say that "those who believe" is the subject and "for them is the glad tidings" is the predicate but that is incorrect, as it would break the sentence from what precedes it and ruin the mode of the verse.

Some forms of *walāyah* may be mixed with some forms of 'adawah with respect to an individual Believer, just as faith may coexist with not having faith, *tawḥīd* with *shirk*, piety with impiety and hypocrisy with faith. There are different views among the Ahl as-Sunnah on this point, but their differences are mostly semantic; only the heretical groups (*ahl al-bid'ah*) have any substantial difference, as we have seen earlier concerning *imān*. However, of all the views, the one that should be adopted is the one which agrees with the Law-Giver's meanings and wording and not just His meaning. He has said, "Most of them believe not in Allah except that they attribute partners with Him" [12:106]; and "Say: You have no faith (*imān*); you should only say: We have submitted our wills to Allah" [49:14]. We have discussed this verse before and said that the people referred to are not hypocrites. The Prophet said, "There are four traits, whoever has all of which is a perfect hypocrite, and whoever has one of them has a part of hypocrisy in him until he gives it up. They are lying in speech, violating a pledge, breaking a promise, and abusing in disputes."[422] In another version of the *ḥadīth*, instead of "breaking the promise" it says, "breaching a trust." This *ḥadīth* has been recorded in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s. We also quoted the *ḥadīth* earlier which mentions various parts of *imān*. A third *ḥadīth* states, "Those who have a particle of faith in their heart will be taken out of the Fire."[423]

It is, therefore, clear that those who have the least amount of faith will not remain in the Fire forever, whatever amount of hypocrisy they may have. They will be punished in the Fire

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[422]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.
[423]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

according to the measure of their hypocrisy, then they will be taken out from it. Obedience to Allah is a branch of *īmān*, and sin is a branch of *kufr*; however, the head of *kufr* is rejection of faith, and the greatest *īmān* is belief and conviction (*taṣdīq*).

It has been claimed that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whenever a group of people gather together, one of them is a *walī* of Allah. They do not know him, nor does he know himself."[424] This *ḥadīth* has no source. It is false. According to it every group, even a party of infidels and a band of evildoers who will die as such, will have a *walī* amongst them.

The complete *awliyā'* of Allah have been described in these words: "Behold! on the friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah there is no fear, nor will they grieve – those who have faith and practice piety; for them are glad tidings in the present life and in the Hereafter" [10:62-64]. The piety referred to here has been explained elsewhere in this way: "Righteousness is not that you turn your faces towards East or West; righteousness is to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book, and the messengers; to spend of your substance out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarers, for those who ask and, for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, practice regular charity, fulfill the contracts which you have made, and to be firm and patient in pain and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the pious (*muttaqūn*)" [2:177].

Pious men and women are of two kinds, those who are of average piety (*muqtasid*) and those who are close to Allah (*muqarrab*).[425] the first are those who seek Allah's pleasure by doing the obligatory duties of the heart and the body, and the latter are those who, over and above their obligatory duties, engage in supererogatory deeds. Al-Bukhārī recorded a *ḥadīth* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah says: Whoever opposes any of My friends declares war against Me. None of my servants comes closer to Me than by doing the duties I have laid on him. And the more My servant does the supererogatory deeds, the closer he comes to Me. Then I love him, and when I love him I become his ears by which he hears, his eyes by which he sees, his hands by which he strikes, and his legs by which he

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[424]Ibn Taymīyyah has said that this is a completely false tradition; no compiler of *aḥadīth* has ever mentioned it (see *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 11:60).

[425]Ibn Taymīyyah as elaborated this point in his *Al-Furqan bayn Awliya' Ar-Raḥmān wa Awliya' ash-Shaytan* (Cairo: Dār Al-Fikr, n.d.), pp. 49ff.

walks. When he begs of Me I give him, and when he asks for My protection I protect him. I do not hesitate to do anything I decide except when I am to take the life of a faithful servant. He does not like to die, and I do not like to displease him."[426]

Walī is the opposite of *'adū* (enemy). It is derived from the word *walā* which means 'to come close'. Hence a *walī* of Allah is one who befriends Him by loving what He loves and doing what pleases Him. It is of such people that Allah has said, "For him who fears Allah He ever prepares a way out, and provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine" [65:2-3]. Abū Dharr said that when this verse was revealed the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Abū Dharr, if people acted upon this verse it would suffice them."[427] Allah does show to the pious a way out in matters that are not easy for others, and provides for them by means they could not have thought of. He guards them against evil, brings them good, reveals to them many things unknown, and grants them miracles.

(73) the most honored of them (the Believers) in the sight of Allah are those who obey Him most and follow the Qur'ān best.

The most honored Believers are those who carry out Allah's commands and follow the Qur'ān best. They are the most God-fearing and righteous, consequently, the most honorable. The Qur'ān has said, "The most honored of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you" [49:13]. According to a *ḥadīth* in the *Sunan* collections, the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The Arab is not better than the non-Arab, nor the non-Arab better than the Arab; the white is not better than the black, nor the black better than the white, except on the grounds of piety (*taqwā*). All men are from Adam and Adam was made of earth."[428] Scholars have debated whether one who is poor and patient is better or one who is rich and thankful (to Allah). Some have exalted one, and some the other. The truth is that the cause for honor is neither poverty nor affluence; it

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[426]Al-Bukhārī, 6502; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 1248; Abū Nu'aym, Ḥilyat al-Awliyā', 1:4.

[427]Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4220; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 2:492; Ad-Dārimī, *Sunan*, 2:303. However, the chain of this *ḥadīth* is broken for Abū As-Salīl, who narrates from Abū Dharr, who did not meet him. Even then, Al-Ḥakīm considers the *ḥadīth* to be *ṣaḥīḥ*, as the other narrators are reliable (*thiqāt*). Al-Albānī declares it weak.

[428]The *ḥadīth* actually does not occur in any *Sunan* collection. It is only recorded by Aḥmad in his *Musnad*, 5:411, but its chain is sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*).

depends upon the work one does, the attitude one possesses, and the feelings one experiences. As it has been posed, the question is invalid. Honor in the sight of Allah depends upon piety and faith, and not poverty or prosperity. That it is why – and Allah knows best – 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Poverty and prosperity are two camels to ride; it does not matter to me upon which I ride." Poverty and prosperity are both tests that Allah has set up for His servants. He has said, "As for man, when his Lord tries him by giving him honor and prosperity, then (puffed up) he says, 'My Lord has honored me.' But when he tries him by restricting his substance for him, then he says (in despair): 'My Lord has humiliated me!'" [89:15-16]. If the grateful rich and the patient poor are equal in piety they are equal in status; but if one is more pious, then he is more honored in the sight of Allah. Prosperity and poverty have no weight, but patience and gratitude do.

Some people look at the issue in a different way. They say that faith (*īmān*) is half patience (*ṣabr*) and half gratitude (*shukr*), therefore, everyone must be both patient and grateful. But people pick up one half or the other, patience or gratitude, and then ask which is better. First they think of a rich man in the abstract who spends his money in ways pleasing to Allah and is grateful to Him, and of a poor man in the abstract who devotes himself to worship and serves Allah bearing his poverty patiently, and then they say that the more perfect of them is the more obedient to Allah, but when they are equal in obedience they are equal in status. Allah knows better. If abstractions were at all granted, it would make sense to ask which of the two is better: a healthy man who is thankful or a sick man who is patient, a master who is grateful or a servant who is forbearing, one who is secure and grateful or one who is insecure and steadfast, and so on.[429]

(74) *Īmān* is faith in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and that everything, good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant, is ordained by Allah.

It has been mentioned earlier that these things are the fundamentals of Islam. The Prophet (peace be on him) reiterated them when Gabriel appeared to him in the form of a desert Arab and

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[429]Ibn Taymīyyah has discussed the point at length; see his *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 11:119-130. See also Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *'Uddat as-Sabirīn wa Dhakhirat ash-Shākirīn* (ed. Zakarīyyah 'Alī Yūsuf; Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmīyyah, n.d.) pp. 209-313.

asked, "What is Islam?" the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Islam is to witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muḥammad is His messenger, and to establish regular prayer, pay *zakāh*, fast during Ramaḍan, and make the *ḥajj* to Allah's House if you have the means." Gabriel then asked, "What is *īmān*?" He replied, "It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His messengers and the Last Day, and that everything, good or bad, is ordained by Him." Gabriel next asked about *iḥsān*. The Prophet (peace be on him) replied, "It is to worship and serve Allah as if you see Him, for even if you cannot see Him, He sees you."[430] This *ḥadīth* is authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) in the judgment of Al-Bukhārī as well as Muslim.

We also have in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections that the Prophet (peace be on him) would sometimes recite in the dawn prayer the *sūrahs* Al-Kafirūn (109) and Al-Ikhlāṣ (112);[431] sometimes he would recite the verses of *īmān* and *islām*, verse 2:136, which says, "We believe in Allah and in the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to all prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them, and we submit to Allah alone," and verse 3:64, which reads, "Say: People of the Book! Come to common terms as believers, us and you, that we worship none but Allah, that we associate no partners with Him, that we erect not from ourselves lords and patrons other than Allah. If then they turn back, say: Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's will)."[432] When a delegation from the tribe of 'Abdul-Qays came to the Prophet (peace be on him) he addressed them and said, "I ask you to believe in Allah alone. Do you know what belief (*īmān*) in Allah means? It is to bear witness that there is no god except Allah, the One without any partner, and to establish *ṣalāh*, to pay *zakāh*, and submit one fifth of the spoils of war (to us)."[433]

It is obvious that he did not mean that these acts would form *imān* without the assent of the heart. On various occasions he mentioned very explicitly that the assent of the heart is necessary. We may conclude, therefore, that these things form *imān* only when

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[430]Discussed earlier; it is recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

[431]Muslim, *Ṣalāt al-Musafirīn*, 726; Abū Dāwūd, 1256; An-Nasā'ī, 2:155-156; Ibn Mājah, 1148. See also At-Tirmidhī, 417; Ibn Mājah, 1149; An-Nasā'ī, 2:170; Aḥmad, 2:94, 95, 99.

[432]Muslim, 727; Abū Dāwūd, 1259; An-Nasā'ī, 2:155; Aḥmad, 1:230, 231.

[433]Discussed earlier; it is recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

they are accompanied by confession of the heart. We have discussed this point earlier.

The Qur'ān and the Sunnah abound in statements saying that one does not have real *imān* unless assent (*taṣdīq*) is followed by action (*'amal*). This has been emphasized more than anything, even prayer and *zakāh*. The latter has been expounded mainly in the Sunnah, but *īmān* has been expounded in the Sunnah as well as the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān, for example, says, "True Believers (*mū'minūn*) are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and, when they hear His words rehearsed, find their faith strengthened and put all their trust in their Lord" [8:2]; or "Only those are Believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the cause of Allah" [49:15]; or "But no, by your Lord, they can have no (real) faith until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against your decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction" [4:65]. The Qur'ān is, therefore, not prepared to call faith true faith unless the things it has mentioned as its prerequisites are present. It has made very clear that these things are necessary aspects of faith. One who lacks them exposes himself to punishment in the Hereafter and does not qualify for entry into Paradise.

There is no contradiction between what the Prophet (peace be on him) said about *īmān* while answering Gabriel and what he said about it to the delegation from the tribe of 'Abdul-Qays. In the former *ḥadīth* he explained *imān* after explaining *islām*. Hence *īmān* included, along with faith in Allah, His angels, books, messengers and the Last Day, all those actions which he had mentioned earlier under *islām*, just as *iḥsān* included, along with what he said about it, all those things which he had mentioned under *īmān* and *islām*. In the latter *ḥadīth*, on the other hand, he explained *īmān* without previously saying anything about *islām*. However, this explanation that I have given here does not go along with what the author has said regarding *īmān*. The *ḥadīth* of the 'Abdul-Qays poses a problem for his way of thinking.

Some people raise an objection, saying that the things that are actually obligatory are far more than the five acts which Gabriel's *ḥadīth* mentions. How is it that this *ḥadīth* limits them to five acts only?[434] One answer that has been given is that these five things are the most prominent symbols (*sha'a'ir*) of Islam. Compliance with

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[434]Ibn Taymīyyah has discussed the question in *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 7:314-316.

them is clear proof of our submission to Allah; similarly, their evasion is a manifest proof of our defiance.

However, I will answer the objection in this way. It is true that the Prophet (peace be on him) has defined religion (*dīn*) as unqualified submission to the Lord. But that part of it which is incumbent on each and every individual and which he must fulfill as far as possible in order to make his submission to Allah exclusive, consists of these five things only. All other duties have been obligated due to some benefit to the people, vary according to individual conditions, and are not binding on everyone. These are either collective duties, like *jihād*, enjoining good and forbidding evil or establishing institutions, such as government, administration, justice, legislation, instruction in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, and so on. Or they are social obligations which we owe to fellow human beings. These are rights for some and duties for others, and terminate when they are fulfilled. These include, for example, paying debts, returning deposits, restoring property wrongly acquired, making amends for wrongs committed against life, property or honor, fulfilling duties towards one's wife and children, and doing good to one's kin. All these duties vary from person to person.

This is not the case with duties such as fasting during Ramaḍān, making *ḥajj*, offering five daily prayers, or paying *zakāh*. To be sure, *zakāh* is a monetary duty; nonetheless it is a duty to Allah. There are specific conditions for its discharge: it has to be disbursed in eight specified channels, and with proper intention. It cannot be paid on behalf of another without his consent, and it is not sought from non-believers. These conditions are not required in social duties. For example, intention is not required if one discharges a social obligation on behalf of another without his consent or knowledge - it will be discharged and the person will be absolved of the responsibility. Further, faith is not a pre-condition; such rights are also demanded of infidels. But the duties that one owes to Allah, such as atoning for a sin which one has committed and for which one is liable to be punished or paying *zakāh*, are enjoined only on responsible adults. They are not enjoined, as Abū Ḥanīfah and his followers say, on children and the insane.

The author's words, "Everything good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant is ordained by Allah," are derived from the *ḥadīth* of Gabriel mentioned before. This is also the burden of many verses of the Qur'ān, such as "Say: Nothing will happen to us except what Allah has decreed for us" [9:51]; "If some good (*ḥasanah*) befalls them, they say: 'This is from Allah.' But if some evil (*sayyīyyah*)

befalls them, they say: 'This is from you (O Prophet!).'" Say: All things are from Allah. What has happened to these people that they fail to understand a single fact?" [4:78]; and "Whatever good happens to you is from Allah; but whatever evil happens to you is from yourself" [4:79]. One may wonder how to reconcile the words "everything is from Allah" with the words "whatever evil happens to you is from yourself". Some people have suggested that the first verse,, which says "everything is from Allah" refers to things like good and bad crops, victory and defeat, which are all from Allah, whereas the second verse, which says that "evil is from yourself," refers to the punishment of people for their evil deeds, as Allah has said elsewhere, "Whatever misfortune happens to you is because of the things that your hands have wrought" [42:39]. Ibn 'Abbās made the same point when commenting on the verse "whatever evil befalls you is from yourself" [4:79], when he said, "and is decreed by Me."[435]

The words *ḥasanah* and *sayyīyyah* in verse 4:78 mean good fortune and misfortune. This is the best comment on the verse that I know of. Another opinion is that they mean obedience and disobedience. A third opinion is that *ḥasanah* refers to the victory of the Muslims in the battle of Badr, and *sayyīyyah* to their partial defeat in the battle of Uḥud. It is clear that the first meaning includes the third, and the second meaning is inconceivable without the first. Moreover, there is no contradiction in saying that evil deeds and their evil consequences are both from oneself, even though everything is predestined by Allah, for a succeeding evil may be a punishment for a preceding evil one has committed, just as a succeeding good may be the reward of a preceding good that one has done. This is fully borne out by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.[436]

The free-willers (Qadarīyyah) cite the words "from yourself" in support of their view of rejection of *qadr*. They say that these words mean that all the acts of men, good or bad, proceed from themselves and not from Allah. But they fail to distinguish what Allah has distinguished when He has said, "Everything is from Allah," that is, both good and evil are from Allah. They refuse to extend this statement to human acts and limit it to their recompense. Allah continues by saying, "Whatever good (*ḥasanah*) happens to you is from Allah, but whatever evil happens to you is from your own

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[435] As-Suyūṭī, *Ad-Durr al-Manthur*, vol. 2, p. 185. See also Ibn Jarīr, *Jami' al-Bayān*, 8:559.

[436] For a discussion of the point see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Al-Ḥasanah wa as-Sayyīyyah* (ed. Muḥammad Jamīl Ghāzī; Cairo: Maṭba'at Al-Madanī, 1391/1971), pp. 17-30.

selves." This means that He has distinguished between *ḥasanah*, which is blessing, and *sayyīyyah*, which is misfortune, and said that the first proceeds from Him and the second from man. Good is ascribed to Allah, for it is He Who grants everything good and no one else. Evil, on the other hand, is created for one purpose or another; it is a means to some good. Never does Allah do anything evil; all His acts are good.

For that reason, the Prophet (peace be on him) used to say in his prayers, "O Allah! All good is in your hands, and evil is not ascribed to you."[437] Allah does not create pure evil; everything that He creates has wisdom. Evil, too, is good in this sense, even though it may be harmful to some. All evil is partial and relative. Total and absolute evil does not exist and is not Allah's work, hence it should not be attributed to Him. One can attribute it only by implication as part of a general statement, such as "Allah is the Creator of all things" [13:17], or "All things are from Allah" [4:78]. Or one can attribute it indirectly as the effect of a cause created by Allah, for example, the statement, "Say: I take shelter in the Lord of creation from the evil of things He has created" [113:1-2]. One may also put it in the passive, such as in the statement of the jinn, "And we understand not whether evil is intended to those on earth or whether their Lord intends to guide them to right conduct" [72:10].[438]

It is not necessary that a thing which is harmful to one must not contain any wisdom to it or should not be good for another. No one can comprehend Allah's wisdom and mercy in His creation. The evil that we have in the world is only partial and relative; it is not universal and absolute. In fact, universal things and general phenomena such as rain and prophecy are good and beneficial for all creation. This is also the reason that Allah does not support an imposter with miracles as He did with the real prophets, for that would be producing universal evil, misleading all mankind and destroying their religion and their life here and Hereafter.

The case of an oppressive king is different, for Allah often removes through him a greater evil than the one he does. There is a saying that sixty years under an unjust ruler is better than one night with no ruler. His atrocities may be multiple, but they often promote the cause of religion just as natural calamities do. If people bear them patiently and turn to Allah seeking forgiveness, their sins may be forgiven; they may even be rewarded by Allah. This is why Allah

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[437]Muslim, 771; Abū Dāwūd, 760; At-Tirmidhī, 3422; An-Nasā'ī, 2:130.

[438]See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Al-Ḥasanah wa as-Sayyīyyah*, pp. 44-45.

sometimes lets a cruel ruler stay in power for a long time. But He does not allow false prophets for long, and He destroys them because their evil affects the entire life, here and Hereafter. He has said, "And if the Messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand, and then cut off the artery of his heart" [69:44-45].

The words, "it is from your own self," in verse 4:79, are very significant. They say that we must always be vigilant and never self-complacent, for evil is there in ourselves attacking us from within. Evil only comes from them. If people harm us we should not indulge in accusing them, for that may be a punishment for our own misdeeds. We should rather recall our misdeeds and seek Allah's protection from them and their evil consequences, and pray for His help in carrying out His commands. This will bring us every good and save us from every evil. This is the reason the prayer in the opening *sūrah* (Al-Fatihah) of the Qur'ān is the best and the most important prayer. It says, "Show us the Straight Way, the Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath and who go not astray" [1:6-7]. If Allah shows us the Way defined here, He actually helps us in carrying out His will and refraining from violating it. No evil will therefore befall us here or Hereafter.

Since sin is something within the soul of man, we need Allah's guidance every moment, and we need this guidance much more than we need food and drink. Some commentators have said that since Allah has already shown us the Way, one is not praying for guidance; rather, one is only praying to be kept from swerving from the Way or to be given further guidance. But this is not correct. We very much need Allah to make us know in detail each and every day what we should do and what we should not do, as well as to inspire us to action. Knowledge is not enough, inspiration to do the work is also necessary, otherwise knowledge will do us more harm than good as it will be a proof against us. We also need Allah to give us the ability to do what the good things we must do.[439] What we do not know is far more than what we know, and what we do not choose to do, due to ignorance or indolence, is either more than, equal to or less than what we choose.

The same is the case with what we fail to do and what we succeed in doing. Further, things that we know only in principle are far more than those we know in detail. We need complete guidance from Allah in all these things. Even when we get complete guidance,

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[439]Ibid, pp. 83-84.

we can pray to be kept along its path, which is the final stage of guidance. The guidance which remains now is guidance into Paradise in the Hereafter. Since the Fatihah is a prayer for this comprehensive guidance, we have been instructed to recite it in every prayer; there is nothing more that we need. We must know that it is simply out of His mercy that Allah has given us this great prayer and made it a means to secure all good and to avoid all evil. The Qur'ān has stated that evil comes from within oneself, even though it is determined by Allah, but good is completely from Allah. Since this is the case, one should be thankful to Allah, repent for one's sins and put all one's trust in Him. And since none other than He can bring us good, in Him alone must we put our faith and trust, and to Him alone should one be thankful or look for forgiveness from sins.

The Prophet (peace be on him) used to combine all these things in the prayer. A *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* says that when he raised his head from bowing in prayer (*rukū'*), he would say, "Our Lord, all praise is for You, praise abundant, beautiful and ever increasing[440] – praise that fills the heavens, fills the earth and fills the space above. Lord, all the greatness and all the glory is for You. This is the greatest truth which any servant has ever said, and all of us are Your servants." This is praise and a statement of thanks to Allah. It also shows that praises of Allah are the most truthful statements a person can make. He would then add, "None can withhold what You give, and none can release what you withhold, and no one is happy against Your will."[441]

This is affirming Allah's unity that He is the one and the only Lord, that He creates and fore-ordains everything from eternity to eternity, that He gives and takes, and that no one can give what He gives or take what He takes. It is also affirming the oneness of divinity that there is only one God, Who gives commands and Who enjoins and forbids, for although men are given riches, kingdoms, glory, luck, power and miracles, no one can benefit anyone against

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[440]These words were said by a Companion praying behind the Prophet (peace be on him) when the Prophet raised his head after *rukū'* (bowing) and he said, "God has heard (the words of) the person who praised Him." the Prophet (peace be on him) greatly approved of his saying that and said, "I saw more than thirty angels vying with one another to be the first to write (your words)." See Al-Bukhārī, 799; An-Nasā'ī, 2:196; Abū Dāwūd, 770; Aḥmad, 4:340. The remainder stated in the text is a separate *ḥadīth*.

[441]Muslim, 447; Abū Dāwūd, 847; Ad-Dārimī, 1:301; An-Nasā'ī, 2:198-199; Aḥmad, 3:87. See also Muslim, 476; Abū Dāwūd, 846; At-Tirmidhī, 3541; Ibn Mājah, 878; Aḥmad, 4:353, 354, 356.

Allah's will or protect himself from Him. That it is why the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "*lā yanfa'uhu minka*" ('no one can benefit him against You'). He did not say, "*lā yanfa'uhu 'indaka*" ('no one can help with You'), for if he had said that, it would have meant that no one can help anyone come close to Allah.

These words fulfilled Allah's unity, or established the meaning of, "You only do we serve, and Your help only do we seek." Since no cause is sufficient to produce an effect unless Allah wills it, He alone should be invoked and begged and beseeched for protection and help. All praise is for Him, and all help comes from Him. There is no power with anyone except Him. Every cause in the world is insufficient; it needs the presence of other subsidiary causes and the removal of opposing factors to produce an effect. Unless the subsidiary causes are available and the opposing factors are removed the effect cannot be produced. Take, for example, rain. By itself, it cannot produce a crop unless there is soil, air and other things there. Again, the crop cannot grow and ripen unless obstacles are removed. Similarly, food and water cannot provide nutrition unless the body has the ability to absorb them; moreover, all these things will not be of avail unless obstructive factors are removed.

The person who gives you something or renders you help, apart from the fact that his will, power and action are produced by Allah, cannot achieve anything, however mighty he may be, unless a number of factors beyond his control cooperate with him and others do not obstruct him. Nothing is realized without the presence of some factors and the absence of others. A particular thing is only partly the cause, not the whole cause. If it is singled out as the cause and others are named as conditions, it is only a matter of semantic convenience. Actually there is nothing in the world that is a self-sufficient cause necessarily productive of an effect. Once you realize this truth, the door to the appreciation of Allah's unity will open for you. You will know that no one other than Allah should be invoked for anything, let alone worshiped or trusted or beseeched.

(75) We believe in all these things. We never discriminate between one messenger and another. We also believe that whatever they have taught is true.

By "these things" the author is referring to everything that he has mentioned so far that we must believe in. The rest of the text means that we should not believe in some prophets and disbelieve in others; we must believe in all of them and accept them all. Whoever accepts some of them and rejects others, in reality rejects them all. Allah says, "They say: 'We believe in some but reject others and try to

take a course midway' – they are in truth (equally) unbelievers" [4:150-151]. This is because the grounds on which one believes in some are also present in the case of others whom he rejects. Moreover, the messenger in whom one believes testifies to the truth of the other messengers. Hence, if he rejects the others, in fact he is denying the one he claims to believe in. His messenger testifies to the truth of the other messengers, and he is rejecting them. Hence, in truth he is an unbeliever, even though he may claim that he is a Believer. He is one of those whose deeds are wasted in this life even though he thinks that he is doing good. He is the most wretched loser of all.

(76) Those of the *ummah* of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, who commit grave sins (*kabā'ir*) will not stay in Hell forever, even if they do not repent, provided they die while Believers in Allah's unity and meet Allah knowing Him. They will be absolutely at His will and judgment. He may forgive and pardon them out of His mercy if He wills, as He has said in His book, "And He will forgive anything other than it (*shirk*) to whom He please" [4:48]. Or He may punish them in the Fire, as is required by His justice, and then, out of pity and the intercession of His obedient servants, take them out thereof and put them in His Paradise. This is because Allah is the Protector and Patron of those who know Him. He never treats them in either of the two worlds like those who deny Him and who are bereft of His guidance and have failed to obtain His protection. O Allah, Protector of Islam and the Muslims! Keep us in Islam until we meet You.

The statement that of the *ummah* of Muḥammad (peace be on him) those who commit grave sins will not remain in Hell forever provided they believed in the unity of Allah when they died is directed against the Khawārij and the Mu'tazilah, who say that the perpetrators of grave sins will remain in Hell forever. On this point they are one; they only differ in the way they characterize these people. The Khawārij say that they are disbelievers, while the Mu'tazilah say that they have left *īmān* but have not entered into *kufr*; they lie between the two. We have already mentioned this point commenting on the author's words, "We do not believe that any of the *ahl al-qiblah* becomes a disbeliever simply by committing sins, unless he considers them to be lawful."

The qualification, "of the *ummah* of Muḥammad" may suggest that people of other communities who committed grave sins before their *shari'ah* was abrogated will be treated differently. This is debatable because the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "All those who have even a grain of faith in their heart will be taken out from the Fire."[442] It is obvious that he has not limited this favor to his own community; he mentioned faith in a general and unqualified manner. It may also be noted that in some manuscripts the words "of the *ummah* of Muḥammad" do not occur.

His words, "in the Fire" are connected to "they will not remain forever" but he put these words for the sake of the speech rhythm and not to make it a predicate for the words "the people who commit great sins," as some commentators have mistakenly understood them.

Opinions differ concerning major sins (*kabā'ir*). Here are the different opinions: (1) there are seven; (2) there are seventeen; (3) they are what all the divine codes have agreed upon in forbidding; (4) they are the actions that keep one from knowing Allah; (5) they are the actions that destroy wealth and body; (6) they are called major as a relative term in comparison to lesser sins; (7) they cannot be known since we have not been informed of them, as we have not been informed of the Night of *Qadr*; (8) there are closer to seventy; (9) everything Allah has prohibited is a major sin; (10) they are the actions that lead to prescribed punishments or promise of the Hell-fire, or curse or anger, and this last statement is the best opinion.

Similarly, there are different opinions as to what minor sins (*ṣaghā'ir*) are. Some people say that minor sins are those for which no penalty here or in the Hereafter has been prescribed. Others say that they are the ones that do not invite the curse or wrath of Allah, or are not threatened with Hell; still others say that they are those for which no specific punishment in this life has been enacted, nor threatened (*wa'īd*) in the next. And by *wa'īd* they mean either the threat of Hell or the curse or wrath of Allah. For, a specific *wa'īd* in the Hereafter is like a specific punishment in this life, and a chastisement (*ta'zīr*) in the world is like a chastisement in the Hereafter short of burning in the Fire or the curse or wrath of Allah.

The definition that we have approved of is not subject to the objections that apply to others. It encompasses all those sins that have been mentioned as *kabīrah* in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, such as associating partners with Allah, murder, adultery, magic, slander

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[442] Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

against innocent Muslim women, flight from battle, squandering the property of an orphan, devouring interest, disobeying parents, taking a wrong oath, bearing false witness, and so on.

There are many reasons for accepting this view. First, it is narrated from the Elders, such as Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Uyanah, and Ibn Ḥanbal, may Allah be pleased with them. Second, Allah has said, "If you eschew the most heinous (*kabā'ir*) of the things which you are forbidden to do, We will expel out of you all the evil in you, and admit you to a gate of great honor" [4:31]. Obviously, this promise is not for those who incur the curse and wrath of Allah and deserve Hell, nor for those who deserve to convicted and sentenced in this life. Third, it is derived from the texts wherein Allah and the Prophet (peace be on him) have mentioned various sins, so it is a definition in agreement with the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

Fourth, it provides a criterion to distinguish between major and minor sins, which no other view does. For example, the view that major sins are seven, seventeen or seventy is nothing more than a claim. Similarly, the view which says that major sins are those that have been forbidden in all divine codes, implies that many sins, such as drinking wine, fleeing from the battle, marriage with women with whom one may not marry either because of common descent or because of common fostering are not major sins for they have been forbidden in one code but not in another. On the other hand, it includes in the major sins such actions as taking a small coin from the money of an orphan or its theft, or telling once a small lie. The view that major sins are those which close the door on Allah's knowledge, or cause the destruction of life and property, will exclude drinking wine, eating pork and slandering innocent women; however, that is wrong. Similarly, the view that major sins are called so in comparison to minor sins implies that in themselves sins are neither grave nor light, which is not correct. Moreover, it goes against the texts which call some sins major and some sins minor. Finally, those who say that we cannot know them only admit their ignorance. This does not mean that they cannot really be known.[443] Allah knows best.

The author has stated, "Even if they do not repent," for there is no question about those who repent. It is known that repentance wipes out all sins. The question is only about those who do not repent.

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[443]For a discussion on the point see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 11:650-657; Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, 1:315-27.

As for his words, "meet Allah knowing Him," it would have been better if he had said, "and believe in Him when they see Him." For one who knows Allah but does not believe in Him is an infidel. No theologian except Jahm has said that faith is simply knowledge. We have already exposed the error of this view; for example, we have said that Iblīs did know his Lord because he said, "My Lord! Give me then respite until the Day the dead are raised" [15:36]; and "Then, by Your Majesty, I will put them all in the wrong, except Your servants among them who are sincere and purified" [38:82-83]; but even then he was not a Believer. The same is true of Pharaoh and most other infidels, for Allah has said about them, "If you ask them who is that who created the heavens and the earth they will certainly say 'Allah'" [31:25]; and, "Say: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Supreme Throne? They will say: 'They belong to Allah'" [23:86-87]. There are numerous other verses of this nature.

It was as if the author had in mind that perfect knowledge of Allah of which the people of the *ṭarīqah*[444] speak and which, of necessity, leads its bearer onto the right path. To be sure, they are not those who commit major sins. On the contrary, they are the best and most eminent people.

The words, "they are at the will of Allah and His judgment. He may forgive them and may pardon them if He pleases," are based on verse 4:48, in which Allah has differentiated between *shirk* (associating partners with Allah), which is the most heinous major sin, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) has stated, and all other sins. He stated that He will not forgive *shirk*, though He may forgive every other sin if He pleases. This means that other sins are not unpardonable. Had they been so, He would not have distinguished them from *shirk*. Further, He has made His pardoning conditional on His pleasure. However, we know that minor and major sins are definitely forgiven upon repentance. Allah has Himself said, "My servants who have transgressed against their souls, despair not of the mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives all sins; He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" [39:53]. It follows that the sins about which He has said that He will forgive if He so pleases are the ones, with the exception of *shirk*, which are not followed by repentance.

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[444] Those meant by "people of the *ṭarīqah*" are the Companions and those who follow their way.

The words, "Allah is the Protector of those who know Him (*ahl al-ma'rifah*)" are somewhat objectionable and we have already referred to this point.

The words, "Allah, our Lord, the Protector of Islam and the Muslims, keep us in Islam until we meet you," are derived from the following invocation of the Prophet (peace be on him), which Shaykh al-Islām Abū Ismā'īl Al-Anṣārī noted in his book, *Al-Fārūq*, based on a report from Anas, "Protector of Islam and the Muslims, keep me in Islam until I see You while following it."[445] There can be no better conclusion of the foregoing statements than this invocation. The Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) prayed in the same vein, "My Lord! You have indeed bestowed on me some power and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams and events. You, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, You are my Protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Take You my soul (at death) as one submitting to Your will (*muslim*) and unite me with the righteous" [12:101]. In the same vein the magicians of the time of Pharaoh invoked Allah when they believed in Moses, peace be upon him and upon our Prophet, "Our Lord, pour out on us patience and constancy, and take our souls unto You as Muslims" [7:126]. It is wrong to justify prayer for death on the basis of these two verses. What has been prayed for in them is death in Islam, not simply death or death at that moment. The difference between the two is clear.

(77) We believe that prayer may be offered behind any person from among the *ahl al-qiblah*, whether he is righteous or impious. We also believe in performing the funeral prayer over them upon their deaths.

The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Offer prayer behind everyone, pious or impious."[446] This *ḥadīth* has been narrated by Makḥūl from Abū Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him. Ad-Daraquṭnī recorded it and remarked that Makḥūl did not meet Abū Hurayrah; moreover, among its narrators there is one Mu'āwīyah Ibn Ṣāliḥ whose reliability is disputed. However, Muslim has relied

[445] Al-Haythamī has noted a slightly different wording of the *ḥadīth* and said that it has been recorded by Aṭ-Ṭabarānī in his *Al-Awsaṭ*, adding that its transmitters are reliable (*Majmū' az-Zawā'id*, 10:176).

[446] Ad-Dāraquṭnī, *Sunan*, (ed. Abdullah Hāshim Yamānī Al-Madanī; Cairo: Dār Al-Maḥāsin, 1386/1966), vol. 2, p. 57; Al-Bayhaqī, As-*Sunan Al-Kubra*, (Hyderabad, 1352; reprint, Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifah), vol. 4, p. 19. It is a weak *ḥadīth* due to its broken chain.

upon him and recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* some *aḥādīth* narrated by him. Ad-Daraquṭnī and Abū Dāwūd have also recorded a *ḥadīth* narrated by Makḥūl from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "You should offer prayer behind all Muslims, whether righteous or wicked, even those who commit grave sins (*kabā'ir*). You must also carry on *jihād* under a Muslim ruler whether he is righteous or wicked or commits grave sins."[447]

Al-Bukhārī has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*[448] that 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar used to offer prayer behind Al-Hajjaj Ibn Yūsuf Ath-Thaqafī, as did Anas Ibn Mālik, even though Al-Hajjāj was recalcitrant (*fāsiq*) and an oppressor (*ẓālim*). He has also recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet (peace be on him) said about such leaders of prayer, "They will lead your prayer. If they do it properly it is good for you and for them; but if they do not do it improperly, it does not harm you, it only harms them."[449]

'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Offer prayer behind anyone who says that there is no god besides Allah; and offer prayer over anyone who dies who said that there is no god besides Allah." This *ḥadīth* has been recorded by Ad-Daraquṭnī with his comment that it is weak.[450]

Know that, may Allah have mercy on you and us, it is perfectly correct for anyone to pray behind a man about whom one does not know whether he indulges in unjustified innovations (*bid'ah*) or vice (*fisq*). This is agreed upon by all the leading scholars. It is not necessary for one to inquire about the beliefs of the person who leads the prayer or question him before praying behind him. You may pray behind one whose condition is not known to you.

You may also pray behind one who has erroneous views (*bid'ah*), even preaches them, or commits wrong openly, if he has been appointed to lead prayer and you have no option but to pray behind him. You may do that in Friday prayers, the 'Īd prayers and the prayer at 'Arafah during the pilgrimage. There is no difference of opinion here among most of the Elders or later scholars. According

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[447] Abū Dāwūd, 594, 2533; Ad-Dāraquṭnī, *Sunan*, 2:56; Al-Bayhaqī, *As-Sunan al-Kubra*, 3:121. This *ḥadīth* is also weak due to its broken chain.

[448] The *ḥadīth* does not occur in Al-Bukhārī. Al-Bayhaqī recorded it in *As-Sunan al-Kubra*, 3:122. Al-Albānī observes that the *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*; see his *Irwa al-Ghalil fī Takhrīj aḥādīth Manar as-Sabīl* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah Al-Islamīyyah, 1399/1979), no. 525.

[449] Al-Bukhārī, 694; Aḥmad, 2:355, 357.

[450] Ad-Dāraquṭnī, *Sunan*, 2:56; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 13622. The *ḥadīth* is weak; see Az-Zaylā'ī, *Nasb ar-Rayah*, 2:27-29.

to most of them, to abstain from praying behind such imams is an innovation. Pray behind them and do not repeat your prayer. The Companions offered their daily prayers as well as the Friday prayers behind wrongdoing leaders and did not repeat their prayers. We have already mentioned that 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar and Anas Ibn Mālik, may Allah be pleased with them, offered prayers behind Al-Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf.

Similarly, 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd and other Companions also prayed behind Al-Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah Ibn Abī Mu'iṭ who used to drink wine. Once he prayed four *rak'āt* in the dawn prayer and then said to the people, "Would you like me to do some more?" Ibn Mas'ūd said, "We have already prayed more behind you."[451] It has been recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that when 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān, may Allah be pleased with him, was being besieged, someone led the prayer in the mosque. A man said to 'Uthmān, "You are the *imām* of the people, but who is the one who leads the prayer, an *imām* of the troublemakers?" 'Uthmān said, "Friend, prayer is the best thing that people do. If they do it well, do it well with them; but if they spoil it, stay away from their wrong."[452]

The prayer of an evid-doer (*fāsiq*) and heretic (*mubtadi'*) is valid in itself. So when anyone prays behind him, his prayer is not invalidated. Those people who do not like to offer prayer behind such men, do so because enjoining good and forbidding evil is an imperative; hence, one who openly professes his heresies or indulges in evil should not be appointed an imām. In fact, he deserves to be chastised until he recants. If it is possible to leave him and offer prayer elsewhere until he recants it is definitely better. If people do not pray behind him and pray behind another, it may restrain him to some extent. Maybe he will recant or be removed; that will certainly act as a deterrent. In either case, the purpose of the Shari'ah is served, and people will not miss the daily prayer in assembly or the prayer in congregation on Fridays. But if by avoiding prayer behind such an *imām* one missed the prayer in assembly or the Friday prayers, he would be doing something unjustified (*bid'ah*) and would be going against the practice of the Companions.

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[451] Ibn 'Abdul-Barr, *Al-Isti'āb*, vol. 3, pp. 596-597. See also Muslim, 1707; Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Iṣābah fī Tamyīz aṣ-Ṣaḥābah* (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'ah Ash-Sharqīyyah, 1325/1907), vol. 3, p. 601; Ibn Al-Athīr, *Usud al-Ghābah fī Ma'rafat aṣ-Ṣaḥābah* (Cairo: Al-Jami'ah at-Ta'awunīyyah li an-Nashr wa at-Tiba'ah, 1384/1964), vol. 5, pp. 451-453.

[452] Al-Bukhārī, 695.

Similarly when the government appoints the imāms and they lead the prayers, one would not be serving the purpose of the Shari'ah if he abstained from praying behind them; one must never do that. The correct course is to pray behind them, as that is much better. But if one can stop a person who openly indulges in evil from leading the prayer, he should try that. However, if the *imām* has been appointed by someone else and cannot be prevented from leading the prayers at all, or can be prevented but only by causing greater damage than that caused by his leading the prayer, it would not be right to remove the lesser evil with a greater evil. Laws have been enacted to secure greater good and eliminate or reduce evil as much as possible. To ruin the regular prayers in assembly and on Fridays is a greater evil than praying behind an evildoer, particularly when it does not deter him from doing wrong. It would simply mean foregoing good without removing evil.

However, when it is possible to offer regular prayer in assembly and the Friday prayer in congregation behind a pious person, it is undoubtedly better than offering them behind a evildoer. If that opportunity is available and a person still offers prayers behind an evildoer without any proper excuse, will his prayer be deemed valid or invalid, and will he be asked to repeat it? Opinions differ on this question. Some say that he should repeat the prayer, while others say he does not do so. We cannot, however, pursue the discussion further. The reader is advised to consult the relevant works.

When an imām forgets something or makes a mistake and his followers are not aware of it, they do not have to repeat the prayer. This view is based on the *ḥadīth* which says that once 'Umar led the prayer and did not realize that he was not clean and that he had to bathe. He repeated the prayer but did not ask his followers to repeat the prayer. Abū Ḥanīfah, however, thinks that if one comes to know after the prayer that the imām did not make ablution (*wuḍū'*), the follower should repeat the prayer. Other scholars such as Mālik, Ash-Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad disagree with him. Opinions similarly differ in cases where the imām does something which in the view of his followers is not permitted in prayer. For details, one may refer to the *fiqh* books. However, if one knows that the imām offers prayer without ablution, one should not pray behind him, because he is not praying, only playing.

The Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the consensus of the Elders prove that the ruler of a state, the imām of prayer, the governor of a region, the commander of a battle, and the collector of *zakāh* are to be obeyed in cases of *ijtihād*. They are not required to submit to the view of their people; quite the opposite, people have to submit and

give up their individual views in favor of such people of authority, for the preservation of unity and solidarity of the community and the avoidance of dissension and discord are far more important than insistence on a secondary issue. This is also the reason one government official should not annul the order of another official. He can also offer prayer behind another official without impairing it.

Once Abū Yūsuf was making *ḥajj* with Hārūn Ar-Rashīd, who underwent a procedure of cupping and on the advice of Imām Mālik did not make ablution and lead the prayer. Abū Yūsuf was asked if he offered prayer behind the caliph. He said, "Glory to Allah! the *Amīr al-Mū'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful) (was leading the prayer)." What he meant was that to avoid prayer behind the people in authority (*wulāt al-amr*) is to follow the way of the misguided innovators (*ahl al-bid'ah*).

The *ḥadīth* which Al-Bukhārī recorded from Abū Hurayrah is very clear on the subject. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "If they (in authority) lead the prayer properly, it is good for them and for you; but if they make a mistake, they are responsible, but you have done your duty." This *ḥadīth* clearly states that when the *imām* makes a mistake, he will suffer for it and not those who pray behind him. As for the *mujtahid* who tries to find out the correct view but misses it, all that he does is that he misses a duty which he did not consider to be a duty, or he does something forbidden which he believed to be lawful. Hence, no one who believes in Allah and the Last Day will go against this clear and authentic *ḥadīth* after he has come to know it. It contradicts all those Ḥanafis, Shāfi'īs and Ḥanbalis who say that if the imām does not do what a follower thinks he should, the latter should not pray behind him. The unity and solidarity of the community is something that must be preserved, and discord and dissension must be avoided.[453]

The author's words, "we believe that prayer should be said for everyone who dies," means that prayer should be said for everyone, whether righteous or wicked. Some categories of people are, however, excepted, such as rebels (*bughat*), plunderers (*quṭṭa' aṭ-ṭarīq*), those who commit suicide,[454] and martyrs, with the difference of Abū Yūsuf regarding those who commit suicide, and of Mālik and Ash-Shāfi'ī regarding the martyrs, as described in their

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[453]See Ibn Taymīyyah's discussion on the point, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 23:370-380.

[454]For the views on these questions see Al-Aynī, *Al-Binayah fī Sharḥ al-Hidāyah*, (ed. Muḥammad 'Umar Ar-Rampurī; Beirut: Dār Al-Fikr, 1401/1981), vol. 2, pp. 1065-1067; and Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, vol. 24, pp. 285-289.

books. What the author wants to emphasize is that Muslims should not abstain from praying for a dead person even if his beliefs and practices were wrong. He does not, however, rule out exceptions.

Those who profess to be Muslims are of two kinds, sincerely faithful and hypocritical. Those whose hypocrisy is well known, we should not pray for at their funerals or ask forgiveness for them,[455] but those whose hypocrisy is not known, we must pray for. However, if someone is aware of a person's hypocrisy, he should abstain from praying for him. 'Umar would abstain from praying for any man for whom Ḥudhayfah did not pray, because in the campaign of Tabūk the Prophet (peace be on him) had told Ḥudhayfah who the hypocrites were.[456]

Allah forbade the Prophet (peace be on him) to pray for the hypocrites and told him that He would not forgive them, even if the Prophet (peace be on him) did pray for them, because they did not have faith in Allah and the Prophet (peace be on him). It follows that we should not abstain from praying for those who have faith in Allah and His Prophet, no matter whether they have erroneous beliefs or indulge in sinful acts. In fact, Allah has positively commanded asking forgiveness for Believers. He said, "Know, therefore, that there is no god but Allah, and ask forgiveness for your fault, and for the men and women who believe" [47:19]. He gave this command to His Prophet, and asked him to believe in His unity and seek forgiveness from Him for his own shortcomings as well as the shortcomings and sins of the believing men and women. Belief in the unity of Allah is the basic principle of Islam, and its perfection lies in seeking forgiveness for oneself and others. To invoke Allah for pardon and mercy on the Believers as well as for other good things is either a binding duty or a commendable act; and in both cases it is either a general injunction or a special one. The first is referred to in the verse mentioned above; by the second I mean the funeral prayer. We have been commanded to pray for every Muslim who dies, and pray for his forgiveness. Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah have recorded a *ḥadīth* in their *Sunan*s on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "When you pray for a dead person invoke Allah sincerely."[457]

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[455]See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 24:285-287.

[456]See Al-Bukhārī, 374, and Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:381.

[457]Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Janā'iz*, 3199; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Janā'iz*, 1497; Al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 4:40; Ibn Ḥibban, 757. Its chain is strong.

(78) We do not "place" any one of them in Paradise or in Hell.

What the author means is that we do not say about anyone of the *ahl al-qiblah* that he will definitely go to Paradise or Hell, except for those that the Honest One, the Prophet, said will go to Paradise such as the ten Companions who were promised Paradise.[458] We only say that those who commit grave sins and whom Allah would like to send to Hell will go to Hell. He may later take them out on the intercession of the people He permits. We say nothing about particular persons. We neither say that this man will go to Paradise and that one to Hell unless we have some knowledge of it, for we do not know about anyone. Faith is an internal matter; what the state of a person is when he dies is not fully known to us. We do, however, hope for the righteous as we fear for the wrong-doers.

Can we witness about a person that he is one of the people of Paradise? the Elders are divided into three stances on this issue. One group says that we cannot witness about anyone except the prophets. This has been reported from Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥanafīyyah and Al-Awzā'ī. Another group says that we can witness about all those Believers who have been mentioned in any text. Most of the leading scholars and the *ḥadīth* scholars hold this view. The third group goes beyond the second and claims that we can witness about those whom the Believers in general bear witness for. In the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s there is a *ḥadīth* that states that once a funeral procession passed by and the people praised the person who had died and said good words about him. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "It is to be fulfilled." Then a second funeral procession passed by and the people spoke ill of that deceased person. The Prophet (peace be on him) then said, "It is to be fulfilled." According to another version of the *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (peace be on him) repeated the words, "It is to be fulfilled," three times. Hearing that, 'Umar asked the Prophet (peace be on him), "What is to be fulfilled?" He told him, "You people spoke well of the first man and praised him, whereupon it will be fulfilled to send him to Paradise. You spoke ill of the second man, and it will be fulfilled to send him to Hell. You are Allah's witnesses on earth."[459] We have another *ḥadīth* in which

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[458]They are Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddiq, 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭab, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Ṭalḥah Ibn 'Ubaydullah, Az-Zubayr Ibn Al-'Awwām, 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf, Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Abū 'Ubaydah 'Āmir Ibn Al-Jarraḥ, and Sa'īd Ibn Zayd.

[459]Al-Bukhārī, 1367, 2642; Muslim, 949. See also An-Nasā'ī, 4:49-50; Aḥmad, 3:186; At-Tirmidhī, 1058; Ibn Mājah, 1491.

the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "You may know who is of Paradise and who is of Hell." the people asked, "How, Prophet of Allah?" He said, "(You may know it) when one is praised and the other is condemned."[460] There are, therefore, grounds for knowing who is of Paradise and who is of hell.

(79) Nor do we charge anyone with not having faith (*kufr*) or *shirk* or hypocrisy (*nifaq*), as long as they do not openly demonstrate anything of that nature. We leave what they believe or do in private to Allah.

We have been instructed to form our judgment in the light of people's apparent behavior, and to refrain from conjecture or acting upon what we have no knowledge of. Allah says, "You who believe! Let not any men among you laugh at others; it may be that the latter are better than the former" [49:11]; and "You who believe! Avoid suspicions as much (as possible); for suspicion in some cases is a sin" [49:12]; and "Pursue not that of which you have no knowledge; for every act of hearing or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be inquired into (on the Day of Reckoning)" [17:36].

(80) We do not believe in taking up the sword against any of the *ummah* of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, except upon those for whom it is obligatory.

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, there is a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The life of a Muslim who witnesses that there is no god except Allah and that I am His Messenger cannot be taken except in three cases: when he commits adultery as an adult, or kills anybody, or turns away from his religion and leaves his community."[461]

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[460] Ibn Mājah, 4221; Aḥmad, 3:416, 6:466. Al-Arnawūṭ says its chain is good.

[461] Al-Bukhārī, 687; Muslim, 26, 1676; Abū Dāwūd, 4352 4353; At-Tirmidhī, 1402; Ibn Mājah, 2534; An-Nasā'ī, 7:90, 91, 101, 102, 8:13, 23; Aḥmad, 1:382, 428, 444, 465, 6:181

(81) We do not believe in revolt against our leaders and rulers, even if they commit injustice, nor do we pray against them or defy their orders. On the contrary, we believe that obedience to them is a duty and a part of our obedience to Allah, so long as they do not order anything sinful. We pray for their safety and piety.

Allah says, "You who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you" [4:59]. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is recorded that he Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Whoever obeys me obeys Allah; whoever obeys the ruler obeys me; and whoever disobeys the ruler, disobeys me."[462] Abū Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, says that his friend (the Prophet) asked him to hear and obey even if (the ruler) happens to be a Ethiopian slave with mutilated fingers.[463] In Al-Bukhārī's version of the *ḥadīth* the last words are, "Even if he is an Ethiopian man with a head as small as a raisin."[464] the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s also have the *ḥadīth* that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "It is the duty of every Muslim to hear and obey, whether he likes it or not, except when he is asked to do something sinful. In that case he should not hear or obey."[465]

Ḥudhayfah Ibn Al-Yamān said that people inquired about good things but he inquired about evils, so that he might not be caught in them. Once he asked, "Messenger of Allah, we lived in evil and ignorance, then Allah brought us this good. Will evil come after this good?" the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Yes." He asked, "Will there be good after that evil?" He replied, "Yes, but it will be polluted." Ḥudhayfah asked, "How will it be polluted?" He said, "There will be people whose ways will differ from my ways, and who will live a life different from that of mine, some of their deeds will be correct and some wrong." Ḥudhayfah asked, "Will there be an evil after that good?" the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Yes, there will be preachers at the gates of Hell. Whoever responds to their call will be thrown into it." He requested, "Messenger of Allah, please tell me about them." the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Certainly. They will have skin like ours, and they will speak our language." Ḥudhayfah asked, "Messenger of Allah, what would

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[462]Al-Bukhārī, 7137; Muslim, *Al-Imārah*, 1835; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Jihād*, 2589; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Bay'ah*, 7: 154; Aḥmad, 2:252-253, 270, 313, 511.

[463]Muslim, 240, 648, 1837; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Jihād*, 2862; Aḥmad, 5:161, 171.

[464]Al-Bukhārī, 693, 696, 7142; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Jihād*, 2860; Aḥmad, 3:114, 171.

[465]Al-Bukhārī, 2955, 7144; Muslim, *Al-Imārah*, 1839; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Jihād*, 2864; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Bay'ah*, 7:160; Aḥmad, 1:17, 142.

you like me to do if it happens in my lifetime?" He said, "Stick to the party (*jamā'ah*) of the Muslims and their imām." Ḥudhayfah said, "Suppose they have no (united) party and no imām." the Prophet (peace be on him) then said, "Then keep away from all those groups, even if you have to eat the roots of trees, until you meet death and you are in that manner."[466]

Ibn 'Abbās narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "If any of you finds something in your ruler that you do not approve of, you should bear it patiently, for one who moves a span's length from the *jamā'ah* and dies, dies the death of the Days of Ignorance (*jahilīyyah*)."[467] In another version, the words are, "he has thrown away his allegiance to Islam."[468] Abū Sa'īd narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "When two caliphs are sworn allegiance to (*bay'ah*) kill the one that secured it later."[469] 'Awf Ibn Mālik reported that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The best of your leaders (*a'immah*) are those whom you love and who love you, and for whom you pray and who pray for you. The worst of your leaders are those whom you hate and who hate you, and whom you curse and who curse you." 'Awf asked, "Should we not take up the sword and fight them in such a situation, Messenger of Allah?" "No," he said, "not as long as they establish prayer among you. Listen: if you have a ruler over you and you see that he is doing something sinful, you should hate his sin, but should not defy his commands."[470]

The Book and the Sunnah prove that obedience to those in authority (*ulī al-amr*) is obligatory so long as they do not command anything unlawful. Allah has said, "Obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those in authority among you" [4:59]. Look at these words. He said, "Obey the Messenger," but he did not say, "Obey those in authority from among you," because they do not command independent obedience. They are to be obeyed only in what is obedience to Allah and His Messenger. Allah has repeated the word "obey" in the case of the Messenger (peace be on him), because one who obeys him obeys Allah, since he never commands what is against obedience to Allah. In fact, he never gives a wrong

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[466] Al-Bukhārī, 3606, 7084; Muslim, *Al-Imārah*, 1847; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Fitan*, 4246.

[467] Al-Bukhārī, 7053, 7054, 7143; Muslim, *Al-Imārah*, 1849; Aḥmad, 1:275, 297, 310.

[468] Part of a long *ḥadīth*, At-Tirmidhī, 2863; Aḥmad, 4:130, 202, 5:344; Abū Dāwūd, 4758; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:59, 117. It is also an authentic narration.

[469] Muslim, 1853; Al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 8:144.

[470] Muslim, 1855; Aḥmad, 6:24, 28; Ad-Dārimī, 2:324; Al-Bayhaqī, 8:158.

command, he is protected from doing such at thing. But those in authority may order what goes against Allah's commands, hence obedience to them is conditional upon their obedience to Allah and His Messenger.[471]

As to the rule that we should obey those in authority even if they are unjust, it is because the evil that would result from revolting against them would be many times worse than the evil which resulted from their injustice. In fact, by patiently bearing their injustice we atone for many of our misdeeds and add to our rewards, for Allah has only inflicted them upon us on account of our misdeeds. The rule is that the recompense of an act is in accordance with the act itself. Hence our duty in such situations is to strive in repenting, seeking forgiveness and rectifying our behavior. Allah says, "Whatever misfortune happens to you is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many of them He grants forgiveness" [42:30]; "What! When a single disaster smites you, although you smote (your enemies) with one twice as great, do you say: 'Whence is this?' Say to them: It is from yourselves" [3:165]; "Whatever good happens to you is from Allah: but whatever evil happens to you, is from your (own) selves" [4:79]; and, "Thus do We make the wrongdoers turn to each other, because of what they earn" [6:129]. Hence, if the people want to get rid of the injustice of an unjust ruling, they should themselves abstain from doing wrong.

Mālik Ibn Dinar said that in some of the heavenly books it states that Allah has said, "I am Allah, the Owner of the Kingdom. The hearts of the kings are in My hands. I make them a blessing for those who obey Me, and a curse for those who disobey Me. So do not worry about kings. Repent, I will make them merciful over you."[472]

(82) We follow the Sunnah and the *jamā'ah*, and avoid disagreement, dissension and sectarianism.

Sunnah means the way of the Messenger (peace be on him) and *jamā'ah* means the congregation of the Muslims, that is, the Companions and their righteous followers until the Day of Judgment. To follow them is to follow the correct path, and to differ

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[471] See the discussion on this point in Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 35:5-17.

[472] Al-Haythamī noted that Aṭ-Ṭabarānī recorded this as a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his *Al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ* on the authority of Abū Ad-Dardā' but one of its transmitters is such that the *ḥadīth* scholars do not accept his reports. See *Majmū' al-Fawā'id*, 5:249.

from them is to go astray. Allah has emphasized this fact many times, for example, Allah says, "(O Prophet!) Say: If you love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins for you, and Allah is Forgiving Merciful." [3:31]; "If anyone contends with the Messenger, even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that of the Believers, We will leave him in the path he has chosen and land him in Hell. And what an evil refuge!" [4:115]; "Say: Obey Allah and obey the Messenger: but if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him, and you are responsible for that placed on you. If you obey him, you will be on right guidance. The Messenger's duty is only to preach the clear message" [24:54]; "Verily, this is my way, leading straight; follow it. Follow not other paths; they will scatter you about from His (great) path. Thus does He command you that you may be righteous" [6:153]; "Be not like those who divided among themselves and fell into disputation after receiving clear signs, for them is a dreadful penalty" [3:105]; also, "As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you have no part in them in the least. Their affair is with Allah. He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they had been doing" [6:150].

In the *Sunan* collections is the following *ḥadīth* which 'Irbāḍ Ibn Sārīyyah narrated and which At-Tirmidhī evaluated as authentic: 'Irbāḍ narrated: "One day the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) delivered a very moving sermon which made us weep and tremble with fear. One of us said, 'Messenger of Allah! This seems to be the farewell sermon. What do you advise us?' He said, 'I advise you to listen to and obey (your leaders). Verily those of you who live after me will see a lot of disputes. You must follow my way (Sunnah) and the way (*sunnah*) of the right-principled and rightly guided caliphs (*khulafā' ar-rashidūn al-mahdiyyūn*). Stick to it and hold strongly to it (like biting on it) with your molars. Avoid new ways, for every innovation (*bid'ah*) is misguidance."[473] He (peace be on him) also said in another *ḥadīth*, "The people of the two earlier books each broke up into seventy-two sects (*millah*) on matters of religion, and this *ummah* will divide into seventy-three sects, all of which will go to Hell except one, which is the *jamā'ah*."[474] *Millah*, as the reporter explains, means here a group of people who expound wishful ideas (*ahwā'*). In another version, it is reported that the

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[473] At-Tirmidhī, 2676; Abū Dāwūd, 4603; Ibn Mājah, 42; Ad-Dārimī, *Sunan*, 1:44-45; Aḥmad, 4 126-127; Ibn Ḥibban, 5; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:95. It is authentic.

[474] Discussed earlier; it is a good (*ḥasan*) *ḥadīth*.

Prophet (peace be on him) was asked what the *jamā'ah*. Is. He said, "It is the way which my Companions and I are treading."[475] He thus made it clear that all those who expound different views will be, in general, doomed, except the people of the Sunnah and *jamā'ah*.

'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd, may Allah be pleased with him, has excellently stated, "If you want to follow a way, follow the way of those who have died, for there is no guarantee that those who are alive will be safe from temptation (*fitnah*). (I am referring to) following the Companions of Muḥammad, peace be upon him. They are the best of this nation, most pious, most knowledgeable and least complicated. They are the people whom Allah chose to accompany His Prophet, and to establish His religion. Respect their position, follow their way, and imitate their virtues and practices; for they were definitely on the right path."[476]

We will elaborate this point further when we comment on the author's words, "We believe that the *jamā'ah* is on the right path and deviation from it is erroneous and accursed."

(83) We love those who are just and the honest, and we hate those who are unjust and dishonest.

This is from the perfection of *imān* (faith) and *'ubūdīyyah* (reverential submission). *'Ibādah* entails perfect and utmost love and complete and utmost submission. Hence, love for the messengers, prophets, and the faithful servants of Allah is a part of one's love for Allah. However, the love that is for Allah cannot be shared by anyone else. Others are loved for Allah's sake, not along with Allah. A lover of Allah loves what his beloved Allah loves, hates what his beloved hates, befriends whom his Beloved befriends, and considers him an enemy whom his Beloved considers an enemy. He is pleased with what pleases Him, and annoyed by what annoys Him. He enjoins what his Beloved enjoins, and forbids what He forbids. In short, his will agrees with the will of Allah on every occasion.

Allah loves all those who are righteous, pious, ever-repentant and pure. And we love whom Allah loves. Since Allah does not love

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[475]At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2641.

[476]Ibn 'Abdul-Barr has noted these words in his *Jami' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Faḍlihī* (ed. 'Abdul-Karīm Al-Khātīb and 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ḥassan Maḥmūd; Cairo: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Ḥadithah, 1395/1975). Abū Nu'aym has recorded a somewhat similar saying of 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar in his *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, 1:305.

those who are dishonest, mischievous and haughty, we also do not love them; we rather hate them just as Allah hates them.

The *Ṣaḥīḥs* of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim record the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever has three things has found the sweetness of *īmān*: that he loves Allah and the Messenger more than anything else; that he loves nobody except for the sake of Allah; and that he hates to lapse into not having faith after Allah has rescued him from it, as much as he hates to be thrown into fire."[477]

Thus perfect love requires complete identification of will with the will of the Beloved regarding everything He likes or dislikes, loves or hates, and regarding everyone whom He considers friend or enemy. We all know that if one loves Allah as one should, one must hate His enemies, love His friends, and struggle in His way. Allah has himself said, "Verily Allah loves those who fight in His cause in battle array as if they were a solid, cemented structure" [61:4].

One loves or hates a person for his good or bad qualities. But it sometimes happens that a person has qualities, some of which call for love and others that call for hatred. He is, therefore, loved for one thing and hated for another, and which of the two is stronger takes the upper-hand. The same is true in Allah's sight. Sometimes He loves a thing for one reason, and hates it for another. The Prophet (peace be on him) has quoted Allah as saying, "I never hesitate in doing a thing that I want to do, but I hesitate to take the life of a faithful servant of Mine. He does not like to die and I do not like to displease him, but it must be done."[478] Allah hesitates because there is a conflict of two wills. On the one hand, He likes what His faithful servant likes and dislikes what he dislikes, namely death. He says, "I do not like to displease him." On the other hand, He has decided on his death and intends it. This is called hesitation, but there is no alternative, as He has made clear. But this will also lead to something that the servant likes even better.[479]

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[477]Al-Bukhārī, 16, 21, 6041, 6941; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 43; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2626; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 4033; An-Nasā'ī, 8:94, 96; Aḥmad, 3:103, 172, 174, 230, 248, 275, 288.

[478]Mentioned earlier, it is authentic. The last sentence, "But it must be done," though, is not part of the *ḥadīth*.

[479]See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 18: 129-135.

(84) Whenever something is not clear to us we say Allah knows better.

The author has stated earlier that no one secures his religion unless he submits to Allah and His Messenger, and leaves the knowledge of a thing not clear to him to one who knows it.

When one speaks on a matter without knowledge, one is simply pursuing one's fancies or desires. Allah has warned, "Who is more astray than one who follows his own fancies, devoid of guidance from Allah?" [28:5]. He has also said, "And yet among men there are such as dispute about Allah, without knowledge and follow every satanic one obstinate in rebellion. About the Evil One it is decreed that whoever turns to him for friendship, he will lead him astray, and guide him to the penalty of the Fire" [22:3-4]; "Such as dispute about the signs of Allah without any authority that has reached them, grievous and odious is such conduct in the sight of Allah and the Believers. Thus does Allah seal up the heart of every arrogant and obstinate transgressor" [40:35]; "Say: The things that my Lord has indeed forbidden are shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth; assigning of partners to Allah, for which he has given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge" [7:33]. He has commanded His Prophet (peace be on him) to leave the knowledge of things to Allah which he does not know: "Say: Allah knows best how long they stayed. With him is the knowledge of the secrets of the heavens and the earth" [18:26]; and, "Say: My Lord knows best their number" [18:22]. When the Prophet (peace be on him) was asked about the children of those who assign partners to Allah, he said, "Allah knows best what they have been doing."[480]

'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "In matters of religion do not rely upon your reason. Had I relied upon my reason on the day Abū Jandal was presented (in chains) I would have opposed the command of the Prophet (peace be on him). I pondered the matter. The agreement was to be written. The Prophet (peace be upon him), said, 'Write: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficient, the Merciful."' the Makkans insisted that it should begin simply with 'In the name of Allah.' The Prophet (peace be on him) agreed, and the agreement was completed, but I refused to accept it." The Prophet (peace be on him) said to him, "'Umar, you see that I have accepted;

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[480] Al-Bukhārī, 1384, 6599, 6600 and 1383, 6597; Muslim, 2639, 2660; Abū Dāwūd, 4711; An-Nasā'ī, 2:58, 59; Aḥmad, 2:266, 393, 471, 518.

even so you refuse!"[481] On another occasion, 'Umar said, "The Sunnah is what Allah and His Messenger have ordained. Do not make your wrong ideas sunnah for the *ummah*."[482] Abū Bakr stated, "What earth will hold me, and what heaven will protect me if I speak about a verse of Allah's Book when I have no knowledge of it, simply on the basis of my opinion!"[483]

Al-Ḥassan Ibn Al-Ḥulwānī has reported from 'Arim, from Ḥammad Ibn Zayd, from Sa'īd Ibn Abī Ṣadaqah, that Ibn Sirīn said, "No one was more diffident in speaking about what he did not know than Abū Bakr, and after him no one was more diffident than 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with them. When Abū Bakr faced a problem and could not find anything in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah that bore upon it, then and only then would he say something in the light of his reason, and that, too, with this reservation, 'This is my view: If it is right it is from Allah; but if it is wrong it is from me, and I pray to Allah to forgive me.'"

(85) We believe that it is correct to wipe over leather socks, whether one is traveling or resident, as has been mentioned in the *ḥadīth*.

It has been transmitted in *mutawātir* form that the Prophet (peace be on him) wiped over leather socks, and that he also washed his feet as part of ablution (*wuḍū'*). The Rafiḍah reject this established practice (*sunnah*). We may point out to them that those who learned *wuḍū'* from the Prophet (peace be on him) and did it in his presence and with his approval, and passed on the practice to those who followed them, are far more than those who passed on the Qur'ānic verse referring to *wuḍū'* (5:6). All the Muslims performed ablution in his time and learned it from none but him, as this practice was not known before Islam. Innumerable people watched the Prophet (peace be on him) making ablution and saw him washing his feet, and reported it in various *aḥādīth*. *Ḥadīth* scholars have recorded, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* and other collections, the *ḥadīth* which originates from different reporters and is transmitted through various channels that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Woe to the heels and the soles

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[481]Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 82; Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Iḥkam fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkam* (ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr; Beirut: Dār Al-Afaq Al-Jadidah, 1402/1983) vol. 6, p. 46. The narrators of this *ḥadīth* are all trustworthy.

[482]Ibn 'Abdul-Barr, *Jami' Bayān al-'Ilm*, 2:136; Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Iḥkām*, 6:51.

[483]See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 4:473; *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, 78, 79.

of the feet (as I am afraid) they might be burned in the Fire."[484] Although the obligation in wiping is simply the top of the feet and in the washing it is all of them, this is not something one is naturally drawn to, as one may be drawn to seeking wealth and power.

Furthermore, if anybody doubts that the *aḥādīth* describing ablution have not been reported in *mutawātir* nature, he should even more so doubt that the verse about ablution has been transmitted by *mutawātir* transmission. But when they admit that the verse has been passed on by *mutawātir* transmission such that its authenticity is beyond all doubt, they should all the more admit that the *aḥādīth* concerning ablution have been passed on by *mutawātir* transmission. Moreover, there is no conflict between the verse of the Qur'ān and the *aḥādīth* that have been transmitted in *mutawātir* form, for the word msh (used in the Qur'ān) sometimes means 'wipe' and sometimes 'wash', since the (desert) Arabs say, "*tamassaḥtu li aṣ-ṣalāh*" - 'I washed for prayer'.[485] There is also an indication in the verse that what is meant by *m-s-h* of the feet is not the *m-s-h* that is an alternative to washing but *m-s-h* in the sense of washing. The verse says, "up to the two ankles (*ilā al-ka'bayn*)" and does not say, "up to the ankles", though prior to it it states "up to the elbows" (*ilā al-marāfiq*). This is because the foot has two "ankles",[486] but the arm has only one elbow (*mirfaq*). Hence when Allah said, "up to the two ankles" this can only mean that He has commanded the washing up to the two protruding bones in the ankle. This, though, is done only in washing and not in wiping, which is confined to the upper surface of the feet. On the other hand, the ankles have been made the limits of the washing. Thus, the view that what is obligatory in ablution is wiping the feet rather than washing them is repudiated both by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

This verse has two well-known readings, the subjunctive mood and the genitive case. Its parsing is discussed in the proper places. The subjunctive reading is a clear text pointing to the obligation of washing the feet. Conjunction with the grammatical structure can only take place if the meaning is the same, as in the statement, "We are not mountains or iron."[487]

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[484]Aḥmad, 4:191. It is authentic.

[485]See Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, 6:92.

[486]Obviously, this is true in Arabic, but not necessarily in English.

[487]Here he is basically saying that since the conjunction has been with the previous grammatical structure (this is known because the word is not **arjulikum*), it must belong to the earlier command to wash and not the later command to wipe.

The meaning of the words *masahtu bi ra'sī wa rijlī* is not the same as *masahtu ra'sī wa rijlī* ('I wiped my head and feet'), as the presence of ba implies an additional meaning to the meaning of wipe, that is, to wipe the head with water. Therefore, the conjunction must be related to, "and your arms". The *mutawātir sunnah* overrules what is understood by some people as the apparent meaning of the verse as the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) explained the wording as well as the meaning of the Qur'ān to the people. Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān As-Sulāmī said, "Those who used to recite the Qur'ān to us, 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān, 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd and others, told us that when they learned ten verses from the Prophet (peace be on him), they would not go beyond them until they learned their meanings."

The word *m-s-h* (wipe) is mentioned in particular reference to the feet to imply that not much water is to be used for the feet, as that is the place where customarily people use more water than is necessary. This topic is well-known and is discussed in the relevant places of the books of *fiqh*.

(86) *Ḥajj* and *jihād* shall continue until the Last Day under all Muslim authorities (*ulī al-amr*), pious or impious. They shall never be suspended or abrogated.

The author is here refuting the Rafiḍah, who say that there will be no *jihād* for the cause of Allah until the time that, from among the descendants of Muḥammad (peace be on him), one named Ar-Riḍā appears and a voice comes from Heaven saying, "Follow him." This is obviously false and needs no refutation. The Rafiḍah claim that the *imām* under whose leadership these acts are to be conducted must be innocent, free of sin. This has no basis. It is contradicted by the *ḥadīth* which Muslim has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of 'Awf Ibn Mālik Al-Ashjā'ī, who said that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Your best rulers are those whom you love and who love you, whom you pray for and who pray for you. And your worst rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you, whom you curse and who curse you." Hearing that, 'Awf said, "Messenger of Allah, should we not then fight them with our swords?" the Prophet said, "No, not as long as they establish the prayer in your community. Know that if you have a ruler (*wālī*) who you see commits a sin against Allah, you should hate his sin but should not

abstain from obeying him."[488] We have cited other *aḥādīth* on the subject while discussing the question of *imāmah*.

There is no *ḥadīth* that says that the *imām* must be innocent and infallible; the Rafiḍah are absolutely wrong. Their infallible and innocent *imām* is only a myth, of no use here or in the Hereafter. He is in hiding, they claim. His name is Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥassan Al-'Askarī. They believe that he went underground around the year 260 A.H. at Sāmarrā. They keep a mule or a horse always ready for him to ride when he comes out. They also keep men there to call at some fixed hours, "Master, Come out! Master, Come out!" These people are fully armed, though there is no one there to fight. They do many other things that make them only laughing stocks.

The author has put in the words "whether pious or impious" in order to emphasize the fact that *ḥajj* and *jihād* are duties related to traveling. A leader is needed to organize them or to make war against an enemy, and this can be done by any *imām*, be he righteous or not.

(87) We believe in the honorable angels that note down (our deeds). Allah has appointed them to keep watch over us.

Allah has referred to these angels in various verses, for example, "But verily over you (are appointed angels) to protect you, kind and honorable, writing down (your deeds). They know (and understand) all that you do" [82:10-12]; "Behold two (guardian angels) appointed to note (his doings) watch and note (them), one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does he utter but there is a sentinel by him ready (to note it)" [50:17-18]; "For each (such person) there are (angels) in succession, before and behind him. They guard him by command of Allah" [13:11]; "Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsels? Indeed (We do) and our messengers are by them to record" [43:80]'; "This Our Record speaks about you with truth, for We were wont to put on record all that you did" [45:59]; "Verily, Our messengers record all the plots that you make" [10:21].

The Prophet (peace be on him) has also spoken about them. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is recorded that he said, "The angels of the day and the angels of the night watch you, one group after the other. They meet at the dawn prayer and the afternoon prayer, then those who were

with you go up to Allah. He asks them how they found His servants, even though He is well aware of them. They say that when they went to them they were engaged in prayer and when they left them they were also engaged in prayer."[489] On another occasion he said, "There are some that are always with you except when you relieve yourselves or are intimate with your wives. Be shy with respect to them, and do respect them."[490]

Commentators of the Qur'ān have written that two angels at the right and two at the left of every person are engaged in noting down his deeds. Those on the right note the good deeds, and those on the left note the evil deeds. Two other angels keep guard, one from behind and one in front. Everyone is thus under four guardian angels during the day and four others during the night, two of them keeping guard and the other two noting down. 'Ikrimah said that Ibn 'Abbās, commenting on the verse, "they guard him by command of Allah" [13:11], said, "There are angels that guard him in front and from behind. But when his death comes they leave him."[491] Both Muslim and Aḥmad have recorded from 'Abdullah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "There is no one among you with whom one of the jinns and one of the angels is not associated." Someone asked him, "With you, too, Messenger of Allah?" "With me too!" he replied, "But Allah has helped me overcome the one of the jinns, and he has submitted. Now he does not suggest except what is good."[492] This *ḥadīth* is narrated with the word *aslāma*. Those who narrated it *aslāmu* have distorted its meaning. Its meaning is that the jinn has submitted and obeys the Prophet (peace be on him). This is the stronger opinion, for that reason, he said, "Therefore, he does not command me to do but good." Those who say that it means that the devil became a Believer have distorted the meaning because devils never become Believers.

The meaning of "who guard by Allah's command" [13:11], according to some, is that they guard him by the command of Allah. That is, Allah has commanded them to do so. This is supported by those who recited the verse with the words *bi-amrī* Allah instead of min *amrī* Allah.

These texts prove that the angels note down our words and deeds, and intentions, which are the acts of our hearts. Intentions

are covered in the verse, "They know all that you do" [82:12]. They are also referred to in the words the Prophet (peace be on him) has quoted Allah as saying to the angels, "When My servant intends to do some evil, do not record it unless he does it, and then write only one bad deed. But when My servant intends to do some good but fails to do it, credit to his account one good deed; but when he does it, note down ten good deeds to his account."[493] The Prophet (peace be on him) has also said that the angels say to Allah - and he is more knowledgeable of Him - "This servant of Yours wants to do evil while he knows it is evil," and Allah instructs them, 'Watch him. If he does it, note down one bad deed equal to his act. But if he refrains from doing it, note down one good deed in your records, for he has left it for My sake.'" These two *aḥādīth* have been recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim in their *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections. The wording noted here is from Muslim.[494]

(88) We believe in the Angel of Death, who has been charged with taking out the souls of the people.

Allah has said, "Say: The Angel of Death put in charge of you will (duly) take your souls; then will you be brought back to your Lord" [32:11]. This verse is not in conflict with the verse, "When death approaches one of you, Our angels take his soul, and they never fail in their duty" [6:61], or the verse, "It is Allah Who takes the souls (of men) at death; and those that die not He takes during their sleep. Those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He keeps back (from returning to life), but the rest He sends (to their bodies) for an appointed term" [39:42]. The Angel of Death is in charge of taking souls, and when he takes a soul out, the angels of mercy or the angels of torture take charge of it. All this happens according to Allah's decree and by His command. Hence, death may be attributed to each of them according to his part in it.

People have different views on the nature of the soul (*nafs*). Is it a part of the body or one of its incidents? Or is it a body placed in another body where it resides, or is it a pure substance? Again, is it the same as spirit (*rūḥ*) or different from it? Are there three souls, namely one inciting to evil (*al-ammārah bi as-sū'*), a second admonishing (*al-lawwāmah*), and a third tranquil (*al-muṭma'innah*),

or just one soul? Does the spirit (*rūḥ*) die, or is it the body alone that dies?[495] These issues would require a separate volume. I will, however, confine myself to a few remarks, God willing.

Some people say that the spirit is eternal. However, the prophets of Allah are agreed that it is a contingent being, created, fashioned, controlled and nourished by Allah. One of the basic principles of all prophetic religions is that the world is contingent. This is also the belief of the Companions and their Successors. After them, some people who had little knowledge of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah began to claim that the spirit is eternal. They said that the spirit is an 'amr' (command) of Allah and therefore uncreated. They argued from the verses in which Allah has ascribed the spirit to Himself, such as, "Say the spirit is out of my Lord's command" [17:85], and "I breathed into him of My spirit" [15:29]. They say that Allah has ascribed the spirit to Himself just as He has ascribed knowledge, power, hearing, seeing, and hands to Himself. There are others who are not able to form any opinion on the subject.

The Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah are all agreed that the spirit is created. Their consensus on this point has been reported by Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr Al-Marwazī, Ibn Qutaybah and others.

Of the proofs that the spirit is created, one is the verse, "Allah is the Creator of all things" [13:16; 39:62]. This is an unqualified, general statement that is not particularized in any fashion. It applies, among other things, to the spirit. One cannot counter it by saying that it should then apply to the divine attributes also, for the attributes of Allah are part of His Being. Allah is Allah, qualified with all the attributes of perfection. His knowledge, His power, His life, His hearing, His seeing, and all His attributes are part of His Being. His Essence qualified with His attributes is the Creator; all else is created. It is known with certainty that the spirit is neither Allah nor one of His attributes; it is only one of His created things.

Another argument that the spirit is a created being is the verse, "Has there not been over man a long period of time when he was nothing (not even mentioned)" [76:1], and the verse which Allah addressed to Zachariah, "I did indeed create you before when you had been nothing" [19:9]. Since man is both spirit and body, the address to Zachariah is an address to his body as well as his soul. The spirit is also characterized by death. Further, the spirit has been said to be taken and to be returned. This is another argument that it is a created object.

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[495]For a fuller discussion of these points, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 4:416-431; and Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ar-Rūḥ*, 237-290.

The view that the spirit is uncreated can derive no support from the verse, "The spirit is of My Lord's command." Amr here does not mean command but a thing commanded (*ma'mūr*). This use of a verbal noun in the sense of object of the verb is quite common in the language.

The other argument, which draws upon the fact that Allah has ascribed the spirit to Himself, is also not valid. Things that have been ascribed to Allah are of two kinds. First is attributes that do not exist by themselves, such as knowledge, power, speech, hearing, seeing and so on. These things are ascribed to Allah as an attribute is ascribed to its subject. Second are objects that exist in themselves separately from Allah, such as house (*bayt*), she-camel (*nāqah*), servant (*'abd*), messenger (*rasūl*) and spirit (*rūḥ*). These things are ascribed to Him as created objects are ascribed to their Creator. The ascription only underscores the importance and honor of the thing ascribed and distinguishes it from other things of its kind.

There is also a difference of opinion about the spirit: is it created before the body or after it? This was mentioned earlier when the "covenant" was discussed.

There is also a difference of opinion about the essential nature of the spirit. Some say it is a body; some say it is an incident; others say that they do not know what it is, whether a physical entity or an incident. Some say that the spirit is nothing but the four natural elements.[496] Some say that it is the pure blood, free of any odor or odorous impurities. Some say that it is the natural heat, which is life itself. Some say that it is a non-composite, physical entity that is spread throughout the animal world that drives that world and is not divided into essence and body, and that all in the animal world possess the same kind of spirit. Others say it is the breath that is breathed in and out. And there are still other opinions.

With respect to the word "human", does it refer to the spirit only, the spirit and the body, both of them together, or either one of them? the same questions are asked concerning Allah's speech: is it the words only, is it the meaning only, it is both of them together, or either of them? The difference is between the speaker and what he speaks. The truth is that the word human applies to both of them and can also apply to one of them depending on the context. The same is true for speech.

What is proven by the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, the consensus of the Companions and rational thought is that the soul is a body of a

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[496]In Greek and Arab medicine, the human body was considered to be composed of four natural elements. When they were out of balance, the body did not function properly.

different essence from the physical body that is seen. It is a body from light and a higher source. It is very light, living and moving. It is implemented through the physical limbs. It spreads through them as water spreads through a watering place, or as olive oil spreads through an olive tree or like fire in a coal. As long as the limbs are healthy enough to accept the effects of that light body (the soul), the soul remains in that body and drives that physical body's feelings, movements and volitions. But if it becomes bad, the mixture of the compounds becomes bad, and it no longer accepts that effect, the spirit leaves the body and goes to the world of the spirits.

The evidence for that is Allah's statement, "Allah receives (people's) souls at the time of their death" [39:42]. This states that the souls are given death, kept and sent. Allah also says, "If you could see, when the wrongdoers reach the pangs of death and the angels stretch out their hands, saying: 'Deliver up your souls'" [6:93]. This states that the angels stretch out their hands to grasp the souls. It describes the soul as coming out. It also shows that the soul is punished on that day, and it goes to its Lord. Furthermore, Allah says, "He it is Who gathers your soul at night and knows what you commit by day. Then He raises you again to life therein" [6:60]. This states that the souls are taken by night and then returned to their bodies during the day. And the angels take them at death. Allah also says, "But ah! you soul at peace! Return unto your Lord, content in His good pleasure. Enter among My bondsmen. Enter My garden" [89:27-30]. Here the soul is described as returning, entering and being pleased.

The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "When the soul is seized, the eyes see it."[497] This describes the soul as being seized and the eyesight seeing it. In the *ḥadīth* of Bilāl, it says, "The souls are seized whenever He wishes and returned to you whenever He wishes."[498] The Prophet (peace be on him) also said, "The soul of a Believer is a bird clinging to the trees of Paradise."[499]

When the punishment of the grave is discussed, God willing, considerable evidence will be presented: the Angel of Death speaks to the soul; it comes out in a drop-like fashion like water drops from the mouth of a waterskin; it will ascend, from the Believer, a good smell emanating from it, while from a disbeliever a bad smell will exude from it.

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[497] Muslim, 920; Ibn Mājah, 1454; Aḥmad, 6:297.

[498] Al-Bukhārī, 595, 7471; Abū Dāwūd, 439; An-Nasā'ī, 2:106, Aḥmad, 5:307.

[499] An-Nasā'ī, 4:108; Ibn Mājah, 4271; Mālik, 1:240; Aḥmad, 3:455, 456, 460.

This is what the Elders have agreed upon and it is also what rational thought leads one to. Those who have differing opinions only follow false suppositions and invalid misconceptions that cannot, in any way, be taken in opposition to what is stated in the texts of revelation and sound reasoning.

As for the question whether soul (*nafs*) and spirit (*rūḥ*) are two different things or the same thing, the correct view is that the words mean different things, some of which are the same and some that differ. Take, for example, *nafs*. Sometimes it refers to *rūḥ* (spirit); sometimes it refers to something which is associated with the body. Hence, when we want to refer to something isolated from the body, we use the term *rūh*. Second, *nafs* may mean blood. A *ḥadīth* says, "That which does not have flowing blood (*nafs sā'ilah*) does not make the water it dies in impure."[500] Third, *nafs* may refer to the evil eye. It is said, "He has been stricken by a *nafs*," that is, by an evil eye.[501] Finally, *nafs* means a thing itself. In the Qur'ān, it states, "Salute yourselves (*anfusukum*)" [24:61], and "Do not kill yourselves (*anfusukum*)" [4:28].

As for *rūḥ*, it does not refer to the body, neither by itself nor in combination with *nafs*. It has been used for the Qur'ān in the verse, "And thus We by Our Command sent down inspiration (*rūḥ*) to you" [42:52]; and for Gabriel in the verse, "With it came down the Spirit of Faith and Truth (ar-*rūḥ al-amin*)" [26:193]. *Rūḥ* may also refer to the air that moves in the human body. Again, the *rūh* by which Allah helps His friends is still another thing. He has said, "For such He has written faith in their hearts and strengthened them with a spirit (*rūḥ*) from Himself" [58:22]. It may also mean a faculty of the body. People say ar-*rūḥ al-baṣīr* (the seeing faculty), *Ar-rūḥ as-samī'* (the hearing faculty) and ar-*rūḥ ash-shāmm* (the smelling faculty). It may also refer to something even more particular than all of the above, I mean the power of knowing Allah, submitting to Him, loving Him and longing for Him. This relation of this *rūh* is to the spirit (*rūḥ*) as the spirit is to the body. Hence, knowledge has *rūḥ*, *iḥsān* has *rūḥ*, love has *rūḥ*, and honesty has *rūḥ*. People are not equal with respect to these powers. There are some in whom

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[500]These words are not mentioned in any *ḥadīth*. But Ad-Dāraquṭnī in his *Sunan* (vol. 1, p. 37) and Al-Bayhaqī in his *As-Sunan al-Kubra* (vol. 2, p. 253) have recorded a *ḥadīth* from Salman Al-Farsī that conveys the same meaning; however, this *ḥadīth* is weak.

[501]Al-Jawharī, *Aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ*, (ed. Aḥmad 'Abdul-Ghafūr 'Aṭṭār; Beirut: Dār Al-Malāyin, 2nd ed. 1399/1979), vol. 6, p. 2170-2172.

these powers are strong; they are people who are spiritually inclined. On the other hand, there are those who lack all of them or most of them. There are others wherein these spirits are very weak; they are the earth-bound beast.

It is commonly said that there are three souls (*anfus*) in man: the satisfied and tranquil one at peace (al-muṭma'innah), the admonishing (*al-lawwāmah*) and the evil-inspiring (*al-ammārah*), and that in different men one or the other of the three is predominant.[502] Allah has referred to these souls in verses 89:27, 75:2 and 12:53. The truth is that there is a single soul with three different attributes. It inspires evil, but when faith opposes it, it begins reproaching. It first commits sin, then turns on itself with reproach. For a time, it swings from one to the other, until its faith is strengthened and it settles down and feels satisfied. The Prophet (peace be on him) referred to this state when he said, "One who feels happy when he does good, and unhappy when he does evil, is a true Believer,"[503] while he also said, "An adulterer is not a Believer while he is committing adultery..."

As to the question whether the spirit (*rūḥ*) is mortal or not, people have different views.[504] Some say that it is mortal, for it is a soul (*nafs*) and every soul is to die. Allah has said, "All that is on earth will perish, but will abide (forever) the countenance of your Lord, Full of Majesty, Bounty and Honor" [55:26-27]; and, "Everything (that exists) will perish except his own countenance" [28:88]. These people say that when even angels perish, the souls of men will certainly also perish. Others say that the spirits do not perish, because they have been created to abide forever; only the bodies perish. In support, they cite those *aḥādīth* which speak of the pleasure and pain that spirits will suffer after they leave their bodies until Allah gives them new bodies.

The correct view on the issue may be stated like this. One may understand the death of the soul to mean its departure from the body, not its destruction. In this sense, the soul is mortal. But if one means that it perishes and disappears completely, then it is not mortal in that sense; it continues to live after death, and has pleasure or pain. We will discuss this point later, God willing.

Allah states about the inhabitants of Paradise, "They taste not death therein, save the first death" [44:56]. That death is in reference

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[502]See Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ar-Rūḥ*, pp. 294-305.

[503]Part of a *ḥadīth*, At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Fitan*, 2165; Aḥmad, 1:18, 26; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:114. It is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

[504]See Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ar-Rūḥ*, pp. 49-54.

to the spirit leaving the body. As for the inhabitants of Hell, Allah says, "They say: Our Lord, twice have You made us die and twice have You made us live" [40:11]; Allah also says, "How do you disbelieve in Allah when you were dead and He gave life to you! Then He will give you death, then life again" [2:28]. These verses are referring to the first death, when people were a germ cell in the loins of their fathers and in the wombs of their mothers. Allah then gave them life after that and then caused them to die. He will then give them life again on the Day of Resurrection. That is not in reference to death of their spirits before the Day of Resurrection, as in that case there would be three deaths.

Furthermore, the stupefaction that will occur to everyone upon the Blowing of the Trumpet does not necessarily imply another death, because the people will also fall into a swoon when Allah comes to make His judgments and when He lights up the earth with His light, but that is not death. God willing, that will be discussed later. Similarly, Moses' falling into a stupor was also not death, but – and Allah knows best – the Blowing of the Trumpet will mean death for all those creatures that will not yet have experienced death. As for those who will have already experienced death and those for whom death is not written, the houris and other inhabitants of Paradise, the verse does not prove that they will experience another death. But Allah knows best.

(89) We believe that some people may be punished in their graves if they deserve it, and that Munkar and Nakīr will question people about their Lord, their religion and their Prophet, as has been reported by the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) and the Companions. We believe that the grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of the Hell-fire.

Allah says, "But the brunt of the penalty encompassed on all sides the people of Pharaoh. They will be brought before the Fire, morning and evening. And when the Day of Judgment is established (it will be said): Cast you the people of Pharaoh into the severest penalty" [40:45-46]. He has also said, "So leave them alone until they encounter that Day of theirs wherein they will (perforce) swoon (with terror), the Day when their plotting will avail them nothing, and no help will be given them. And verily for those who do wrong, there is another punishment besides this. But most of them understand not" [52:45-47]. This may refer to their slaughter by the Believers in (various battles in) this life, or their punishment during the interim between death and resurrection (al-barzakh). The second

meaning is preferred because it is a fact that a number of these people die and are not punished in this world, which the verse would then require.

Al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I and some others were at the funeral of a person in the cemetery of Garqad when the Prophet (peace be on him) came and sat down. We sat down around him. We were completely silent as if birds had perched on our heads. When the body was interred in the grave the Prophet (peace be on him) said, 'I seek refuge in Allah from the torture of the grave,' and he repeated these words three times. Then he said, 'When a believing person proceeds towards the next life and leaves this life, angels come down to him with faces bright like the sun. They have with them a shroud from the shrouds of Paradise, as well as some of its sweet-smelling herbs. They sit down at the distance of his eyesight. The angel of death then comes and sits down at his head and says, "Good soul, come out to the pardon and the pleasure of Allah," whereupon the soul comes out as smoothly as a drop of water trickles down from the mouth of a waterskin. The angel takes it, and as soon as he takes it in his hand, other angels put it in the shroud and the sweet-smelling herbs they had brought with them. A sweet smell like the best musk of this world comes from it.

'Then they ascend with it. Whenever they pass by other angels, they are questioned about the soul, "What is that good soul?" They will say, "So-and-so son of So-and-so." They will call him by the best names by which he was known in this life. This happens until they reach the heavens. They will ask for its doors to open. Its doors are opened and they enter. The angels that are there flock around it and greet it. The same happens at all the heavens until they reach the seventh heaven. Allah then says, "Put the records of My servant in the *illiyin* and return him to the earth. I have created them from the earth, and to it they will be returned, and from it I will take them out again." 'At that time his soul will be returned to his body. Two angels will come to him, seat him, and question him, "Who is your Lord?" He will say, "My Lord is Allah." They will then ask, "What is your religion?" He will say, "My religion is Islam." Their next question will be, "Who is this man who was sent to you?" He will say, "He is the Messenger of Allah." They will ask, "How did you know that?" He will answer, "I read the Book of Allah, and I believed in him, and proclaimed that he was true." Thereupon a voice will come from the heaven, "My servant has spoken the truth. Give him a bed from Paradise, and open one of its doors towards him." He will then breathe the good scent of

Paradise. His grave will be expanded until the reach of his eyes. Then a handsome figure neatly dressed and smelling good will come to him and say, "Welcome. May you be as happy as you have been promised." He will ask, "Who are you?" He will answer, "I am your good deeds." Then the man will exclaim, "Lord, let the Hour come, that I may see my family and my wealth." 'But when an infidel,' the Prophet continued, 'leaves this life and proceeds to the next, angels with black faces come down from the heaven. They have a coarse black shroud with them, and take their seat at the distance of his eyes. Then the angel of death comes, sits at his head, and says, "Evil soul, get out and move to the wrath of Allah." The soul runs here and there in the body, so the angel pulls it out just as you remove a spit from a wet quilt. As soon as he takes it out, other angels put it in the black shroud that smells fouler than the foulest thing on the earth. They ascend with it. Whenever they pass by a group of angels they are asked, "What is this evil soul?" They answer, "So-and-so, son of So-and-so," and they will call him by the worst names that he had in this world.

'When they reach the lowest heaven, they seek permission to enter, but are refused.' At this moment, the Prophet (peace be on him) recited the Qur'ānic verse, 'The gates of Heaven will not be opened, nor will they enter into Paradise until a camel can pass through the eye of a needle' [7:40]. The Prophet (peace be on him) continued, 'Allah will then command, "Put down his records in the *sijjin*, in the lowest depths of the earth. Then his soul will be thrown down.' The Prophet (peace be on him) at that moment recited the verse, 'If anyone assigns partners to Allah he is as if he had fallen from heaven and been snatched up by birds, or the wind had swooped (like a bird on its prey) and thrown him into a far distant place' [22:31].

The Prophet (peace be on him) continued, 'His soul will be put back into his body. Then two angels will come and sit down with him and ask, "Who is your Lord?" He will say, "Oh! Oh! I don't know." They will say to him, "Who is this man who was sent to you?" He will say, "Oh! Oh! I don't know!" A voice will come from the heaven, "He is a liar. Prepare for him a bed of fire and open a door of Hell towards him." He will suffer its heat, and get its scorching wind. His grave will squeeze him until his ribs break. Then a man with an ugly face and in shabby clothes and with the foulest smell will come to him and say, "Woe to you! This is the day that you were promised." He will ask, "Who are you with such an evil and ominous face?" He will say, "I am your evil deeds." He will plead, "Lord, postpone the Judgment, I beg you."""' Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd have recorded this *ḥadīth* in full and Al-Nasā'ī and Ibn

Mājah have recorded its first part. Al-Ḥākim and Abū 'Awānah Al-Isfra'īnī have also recorded it in their *Ṣaḥīḥ*s and Ibn Ḥibban in his own collection.[505]

All the scholars of Sunnah and *ḥadīth* believe in what this *ḥadīth* states. There are also some supporting *aḥādīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections. Al-Bukhārī, for example, records a *ḥadīth* transmitted by Sa'īd, from Qatādah, from Anas, that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "When a person is put in the grave and his companions depart he hears the sounds of their footsteps. Two angels come and make him sit up. Then they ask him, 'What do you say about this man, Muḥammad?' If he is a Believer he says, 'I witness that he is a servant of Allah and his Messenger.' They say, 'Look at your seat that was in the Fire. Allah has replaced it with one in Paradise.' He will cast a look at both of them." Qatādah says that it was narrated that, "His grave will be expanded."[506]

Another *ḥadīth* in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s reported by Ibn 'Abbās states that the Prophet (peace be on him) passed by two graves and said, "The men in these graves are being punished but not for something big. One did not protect himself from urine and the other went on slandering people." He then asked for a green branch of a date palm, divided it into two and put one part on each grave saying, "I hope these will bring some relief to them until they dry."[507]

Abū Ḥātim (Ibn Ḥibban) has recorded a *ḥadīth* in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "When any one of you is interred in the grave two angels, both black and blue, come to him. One is called Munkar and the other Nakīr..."[508] Abū Ḥātim has recorded the *ḥadīth* in its entirety.

The *aḥādīth* from the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) that speak of the suffering of the people or their joys and their questioning by the two angels in the graves reach the level of *mutawātir*. We must believe in them and believe that the things they say are true, and abstain from asking about their modalities. We have not seen anything like them in this life, and cannot therefore understand them with our reason. There is nothing in the Islamic

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[505] Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4753; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Janā'iz*, 4:101; Aḥmad, 4:287, 295, 296; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:87-40. The *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[506] Al-Bukhārī, 1338, 1374; Muslim, *Al-Jannah*, 2870; An-Nasā'ī, 4:97-99; Aḥmad, 3:126; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 1522.

[507] Al-Bukhārī, 216, 218, 1361, 1378, 6052, 6055; Muslim, *Aṭ-Ṭahārah*, 292; At-Tirmidhī, *Aṭ-Ṭahārah*, 70; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṭ-Ṭahārah*, 20; An-Nasā'ī, 1:28-30; Aḥmad, 1:225.

[508] See At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Janā'iz*, 1071; Ibn Ḥibban, 780. It is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

texts that reason may consider to be impossible, although it does refer to matters that are difficult to comprehend. The soul will not be returned, for example, to the body in the way we are aware of in this world. That will occur in a completely different way.

There are five types of relationships between the spirit and the body and they have different circumstances. They are: (1) the connection between them while the person is a fetus in the mother's womb; (2) the connection between them after the person is born; (3) the connection between them while the person is asleep, they are connected to each other in one way and not in another way; (4) the connection between them in *al-barzakh* (between death and resurrection). Although the spirit is separated from the body it is not a complete separation such that there is no longer any connection between them, as it is related that the soul is returned to the body any time a Muslim sends his greetings.[509] It is also recorded that he hears their footsteps when the people walk away from him. This is a special kind of returning to the body that does not imply that the body has any life in it before the Day of Resurrection; (5) the connection between them on the Day the bodies are resurrected. This will be the most complete connection with the body, which has no relation to the previously mentioned type of connections between the two, as it is a connection in which the body will not face with it any death, sleep or spoilage. Truly, sleep is the brother of death.[510] If you ponder that, it will remove many points of confusion.

The questioning in the grave is not just directed to the spirit, as Ibn Ḥazm and others say. An even more preposterous statement is to say that it is for the body only without the spirit. The authentic *aḥādīth* refute both of these views.

Therefore, the punishment in the grave is for both the body and the soul, according to the agreement of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. The soul feels pain and pleasure in conjunction with, and while separate from, the body.

The punishment of the grave is the same thing as the punishment of *al-barzakh*. Everyone who dies and is deserving of punishment receives his share of it, whether he is buried in a grave or not. If an animal eats him, he is burned to a crisp, scattered by a windstorm, crucified, or drowns in a boat, the punishment of the spirit and body will reach him in the same way that it reaches those in the grave.

As for what is related concerning his sitting and differences concerning their chests, they must be understood from the

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[509] Abū Dāwūd, 2041.

[510] Al-Bukhārī, 1338, 1346; Muslim, 2870.

Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) in the way he meant them, without exaggeration or understatement. His words cannot be interpreted in a manner that is not consistent with what he said. Neither should one minimize the words he said as part of guidance. Whenever that occurs, it usually leads to misguidance. One turns away from the truth that only Allah can know. In fact, improper understanding of Allah and His Messenger is the source of all the heresies and misguidance that have cropped up in the history of Islam. It is the source of mistakes in both the essential and secondary matters of the religion. This is particular the case when it is combined with bad intentions.

In sum, there are three worlds: the world of this life, the world of *al-barzakh* and the everlasting world. Allah has made for every world laws that are particular to it. He has made human beings with both bodies and souls and the rulings of this world apply to the bodies with the souls following suit. In *al-barzakh*, the judgment is based on the souls with the bodies following suit. On the Day the bodies are resurrected from their graves, the judgment, pleasures and punishments will be for the spirits and bodies together. If this is pondered and understood properly, it will become clear how the grave is either a garden of Paradise or a ditch from the Fire. This is, therefore, the truth without any question. By this, the Believer in the Unseen is distinguished from others.

One must also realize that the fire and the pleasure that are in the grave are not of the same variety as the fires and pleasures of this world. Allah heats up the soil and stones that are above and below the person until it becomes a fire much greater than the coals of this world. But if the people of this world touch it, they do not feel it. Even more amazing than that is that two people can be buried next to each other and one of them is in a ditch of the Hell-fire and the other is in a garden of Paradise. The heat of the fire of one does not reach the other; nor do the bounties of the latter reach the former. Allah's power is even greater and more than magnificent than that. But souls are passionately in love with denial and rejection of anything they do not have knowledge of. However, Allah has, in fact, shown us things in this world that demonstrate His magnificent powers, which are much greater than what was described above. He allows those of His servants to see them as He wishes and He keeps others blind to them. If Allah were to show them to all His servants, human responsibility and belief in the Unseen would become meaningless.

An example is the burying of souls. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* it states that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "If it were not for the fact that you would no longer bury people, I would ask Allah to allow you to hear the sounds of the punishment in the grave that I hear." Since

there is no benefit in hiding it from the animals, they are allowed to hear such sounds.

Is the questioning by Munkar and Nakīr something exclusive to this *ummah*? There are three opinions on this question. The third opinion is not to give any definite answer. This was the stance of a number of scholars, including Abū 'Amr Ibn 'Abdul-Barr. He said, "In the *ḥadīth* of Zayd Ibn Thābit it is stated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, 'This *ummah* will be tested in the grave.' Some people narrate it with the word "questioned" (in the grave). Based on this wording, it seems that this is something particular to this *ummah*. This is something that cannot be stated definitively, as it could also be that it is not something particular. Allah knows best.

Similarly, there is a difference of opinion over whether children will be questioned.

Another question is whether the punishment of the grave will be something continual or will come to an end. The response to this is that there are two types of punishments in the grave, one being continual. Allah has said, "The Fire: they are exposed to it morning and evening; and on the Day when the Hour apprises (it is said): Cause Pharaoh's folk to enter the most awful doom" [40:46]. Also, in the *ḥadīth* of Al-Bara' Ibn 'Āzib, it mentions the plight of the disbeliever: "Then the gates to the Hell-fire are opened and he looks at his place therein until the Hour" [recorded by Aḥmad in some of the narrations].[511]

The second type is a temporary form. It will continue for some time and then stop. This is the punishment for sinners whose sins were light. They will be punished to the extent of their sins and then they will be relieved of the punishment, as was discussed earlier.

There is also a difference of opinion concerning where the spirits reside during the time between death and the Day of Judgment. Some say that the souls of the Believers are in Paradise and the souls of the disbelievers are in Hell. Some say that the souls of the Believers are at the outskirts of Paradise, at its gates, where they receive its scent, bounties and sustenance. Some say that they are at the open spaces of their graves. Mālik said, "It has been told to me that the spirits are free; they go wherever they wish." Some say that the souls of the Believers are with Allah and they do not add anything to that. Some have even said that the souls of the Believers are close to Damascus, while those of the disbelievers are in the Barhut well in Hadhramaut. Ka'b said, "The souls of the Believers are in the *illiyīn* in the seventh heaven; the souls of the disbelievers

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[511]Discussed earlier, it is authentic.

are in the *sijjīn* in the seventh earth under the cheek of Iblīs." Some say that the souls of the Believers are at the well of Zamzam and those of the disbelievers are in the well of Barhut. Others say that the souls of the Believers are on the right side of Adam while those of the disbelievers are on his left. Ibn Ḥazm and others said that they reside wherever they existed before their bodies were created. Abū 'Amr Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said, "The souls of the martyrs are in Paradise. The souls of the rest of the Believers are in the open spaces of their graves."

It is related that Ibn Shihāb said, "I have been informed that the souls of the martyrs are like green birds perched on the Throne. They go back and forth in the gardens of Paradise, and their Lord comes to them every day to greet them." One sect says that they are in pure nothingness. This is the statement of those who say that one's soul is an incident of the incidents of the body, like his life. This statement contradicts the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Another sect states that they reside after death in new bodies that are the results of the character and attributes the person achieved in his life. Every soul is transformed into an animal that is similar to that soul. This is the statement of those who believe in reincarnation and reject the notion of resurrection. It is a statement that falls completely outside the realm of Islam. This short treatise is not the place to discuss the evidence for all of the above opinions.

One can conclude that the souls in *al-barzakh* are at very different levels. Some of them are in the highest ranks of the *'illiyīn* among the highest Companions, that is, the prophets, and they also are of different ranks in their places.

Some souls are in green birds that fly wherever they wish in Paradise. These are the souls of some of the martyrs, but not all of the martyrs. Some of their souls have been held back on account of debts that they owed at the time of the their deaths. In the *Musnad* it is recorded from Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Jaḥsh that a man came to the Prophet (peace be on him) and said, "Messenger of Allah, what will be my (portion) if I die in Allah's path?" He answered, "Paradise." When he turned away, the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Except in the case of debt. Gabriel just came to me to inform me about that."[512]

Some souls are confined at the gate of Paradise. This is stated in the *ḥadīth* in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said,

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[512]Aḥmad, 4:350; An-Nasā'ī, 7:314-315; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 19:556, 557, 558, 559, 560. It is authentic.

"I saw your companion confined at the gate of Paradise."[513] Some are confined in their graves; others are confined on earth. Some souls are being burned in a baking oven – those who committed adultery, in a river of blood or being pelted with rocks. All of those things are mentioned in the *aḥādīth*.[514] But Allah knows best.

As for the special life reserved for the martyrs, it has some characteristics that distinguish it from others. Allah says, "Think not of those slain in the way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are living; with their Lord they have provision" [3:169]. He also said, "And call not those slain in the way of Allah dead. Nay, they are living, only you perceive not" [2:154]. Allah has put their souls in the stomachs of green birds, as is stated in the *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "As for what has happened to your companions who died during the battle of Uḥud, Allah has put their souls in the bellies of green birds among the rivers of Paradise, eating from its fruits, they get shelter in the candelabra of gold, being shaded in the shade of the Throne." This was recorded by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd. Muslim has something similar from Ibn Mas'ūd.[515] Since they sacrificed their bodies for the sake of Allah until their enemies killed them, Allah gave them a much better body in *al-barzakh*. They will remain in that body until the Day of Judgment. The pleasures they receive through that body will be greater than the pleasures that the souls devoid of any bodies will receive.

This is why the souls of the Believers will be in the shapes of birds or like birds, and the souls of the martyrs will be in the bellies of the birds. Ponder what these two *aḥādīth* say. In the Muwaṭṭā it is recorded that Ka'b Ibn Mālik narrated from the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him), who said, "The soul of a Believer is a green bird that sits in the trees of the Garden until Allah returns it to his body on the Day of Resurrection."[516] The souls of the Believers includes both the martyrs and others. But in particular, the martyrs are in the stomachs of birds. If they are in the stomachs of birds, it is correct to say they are birds. Therefore, in that sense, they are included in the *ḥadīth* just mentioned. Their portion of pleasures in *al-barzakh*, then, is greater than the portion of those who died in their beds (and not in *jihād*), even though many of those who died in their beds may

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[513]Aḥmad, 4:136, 5:7; Ibn Mājah, 2423. It is also authentic.

[514]See the lengthy *ḥadīth* of Samura, Al-Bukhārī, 7047.

[515]Aḥmad 1:266; the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Mas'ūd is in Muslim, 1887, At-Tirmidhī, 3014, Ibn Mājah, 2801.

[516]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

be of higher rank, but the martyrs have a special pleasure that no one shares with them. Allah knows best.

Allah has forbidden the earth to devour the bodies of the prophets, as has been narrated in the *Sunan* works.[517] As for the martyrs, many have been witnessed some time after their burial and it is as if their bodies have not changed. Therefore, it could be that their bodies are also preserved in the soil until the Day they are resurrected. Or, it could be that the earth will devour them after some time. Allah knows best. It could be – and Allah knows best – since martyrdom is greater and the martyr is more virtuous, his body will be preserved longer.

(90) We believe in resurrection after death and in recompense of deeds on the Day of Judgment. People will be have their deeds presented and will be accountable for them. They will be given their records to read, and will be rewarded or punished. (We also believe) in the Bridge (*ṣirāṭ*) and the Balance (*mizān*).

Faith in resurrection is based on the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, reason and unadulterated human nature. Allah has discussed it in His Sacred Book, and in most of its chapters, giving arguments for its reality and refuting those who deny it.

All the prophets without exception have called for belief in the Hereafter. Belief in the Lord, however, is a truth that is ingrained in human nature. Faith in Allah is something natural, and all human beings believe in it, except people like Pharaoh, who deny it for some ulterior reason. But the case of belief in the Hereafter is different. Many people have denied it. Since Muḥammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is the last of the prophets, and since he is the harbinger of the Last Day,[518] he has described it in a detail not found in earlier prophetic books. This has lead some philosophers and scholars to think that no one ever spoke about the resurrection of the body except Muḥammad (peace be on him), and that his talk about it is merely allegorical and speech for the masses.

The Qur'ān frequently speaks of reclaiming the soul at death and the resurrection of the body on the Day of the Great Resurrection. Some people deny it and say that no one except Muḥammad has discussed them and that all that he has said is merely imaginary.

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[517]Aḥmad, 4:8; Abū Dāwūd, 1047; An-Nasā'ī, 3:91-92, Ibn Mājah, 1085, 1636. This is authentic.

[518]See Al-Bukhārī, 4896; Muslim, 2354.

They are wrong. Faith in the Great Resurrection is common to all the prophets, from Adam to Noah, to Abraham, Moses and Jesus, peace be upon them all.

When Allah sent Adam down to earth He told him, "Get you down with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time" [7:24]. And when Iblīs, curses be upon him, said, "My Lord! Give me then respite until the Day the dead are raised. He said: Respite then is granted to you until the Day of the Time Appointed." [38:79-81]. And Noah said to his people, "Allah has produced you from the earth, growing (gradually), and in the end He will return you in the earth and raise you forth again" [71:17-18]. Abraham exclaimed, "And Who, I hope, will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment..." [26:82]. He also said, "Our Lord! Cover us with Your forgiveness – me, my parents and all the Believers on the Day the Reckoning will be established" [14:41]; and, "My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead" [2:260].

As for Moses, Allah said to him when He talked to him, "Verily the Hour is coming; My design is to keep it hidden for every soul to receive its reward by the measure of its endeavor. Therefore, let not such as believe not therein but follow their own lusts, divert you therefrom, lest you perish" [20:15-16]. And the person from the community of Pharaoh who believed in Moses warned them, "'My people! I fear for you a Day when there will be mutual calling (and waiting), a Day when you will turn your backs and flee. No defender will you have from Allah, and whom Allah leaves to stray there is none to guide... My people! This life of the present is nothing but (temporary) convenience. It is the Hereafter that is the Home that will last... And, my people! How strange it is for me to call you to salvation while you call me to the Fire...' Then Allah saved him from (every) ill that they plotted (against him), but the brunt of the penalty encompassed on all sides the people of Pharaoh. Before the Fire will they be brought morning and evening. And (the sentence will be) on the Day that Judgment will be established. Cast you the people of Pharaoh into the severest penalty" [40:32-36]. Moses himself prayed, "And ordain for us what is good in this life and in the Hereafter: for we have turned unto You" [7:156]. And Allah proclaimed, "So We said: Strike the (body) with a piece of the (heifer). Thus Allah brings the dead to life and show you His signs, perchance you may understand" [2:73].

The Qur'ān repeatedly states that Allah has sent messengers to give good tidings to people and to deliver warnings. The Inspectors of the Fire, it says, will ask its inhabitants, "'Did not messengers come to you from among yourselves rehearsing to you the verses of

your Lord, and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?' They will answer: 'This is true. But the decree of punishment has been proved true against the unbelievers!'" [39:71]. This admission of the people of the Fire proves that all the messengers (of Allah) have warned their peoples against punishment in this life and the next, just as the last messenger warned his people. The Qur'ān is full of promises of rewards and threats of punishment in the present life and the life to come.

In fact, the prophets have been asked to swear by it: "The unbelievers say: 'Never to us will come the hour.' Say: Nay! But most surely, by my Lord, it will come upon you" [34:3]. And, "They seek to be informed by you: 'Is that true?' say: Aye, by my Lord! It is the very truth! And you cannot frustrate it'" [10:53]; "The unbelievers think that they will not be raised up (for Judgment). Say: Yea, by my Lord, you will surely be raised up. Then will you be told (the truth) of all that you did. And that is easy for Allah" [64:7].

That the Hour of Judgment is near has been repeatedly emphasized, for example, "The Hour (of Judgment) is nigh, and the moon is cleft asunder" [54:1]; "Closer and closer to mankind comes their reckoning. Yet they heed not and they turn away" [21:1]; "A questioner asked about a penalty to befall the unbelievers, the one there is none to ward off... They see the Day indeed as a far-off (event). But we see it (quite) near" [70:1-7].

Those who deny it have been condemned: "Assuredly those will be lost who denied the meeting with Allah and refused to receive the true guidance" [19:45]; "Until on a sudden the Hour is on them, they will say: 'Ah! woe unto us that we took no heed of it'" [6:31]; "Behold! Verily those that dispute concerning the Hour are far astray" [42:18]; "Still less can their knowledge comprehend the Hereafter. Nay, they are in doubt and uncertainty thereat. Nay, they are blind thereunto!" [27:66]; "They swear their strongest oaths by God, that Allah will not raise up those who die. Nay, but it is a promise (binding) on Him in truth...that the rejecters of Truth may realize that they had indeed (surrendered to) falsehood" [16:38-39]; "The hour will certainly come. Therein is no doubt. Yet most men believe not" [40:59]; "On the Day of Judgment We will gather them together prone on their faces, blind, dumb and deaf; their abode will be Hell. Every time it shows abatement We will increase for them the fierceness of the Fire. That is their recompense, because they rejected Our signs and said: 'When we are reduced to bones and broken dust shall we really be raised up (to be) a new creation!' Do they not see that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, has power to create the like of them (anew)? Only He has decreed a term

appointed of which there is no doubt. But the unjust refuse (to receive it) except with ingratitude" [17:97-99]; "They say: 'What! When we are reduced to bones and dust, shall we be really raised up (to be) a new creation?' Say: Nay: be you stones or iron, or any created matter which in your mind is hardest (to be raised up), yet you will be raised up! Then will they say: 'Who will cause us to return?' Say: He Who created you first! Then they will wag their heads towards you, and say: 'When will that be?' Say: May be it will be quite soon! It will be on a Day when He will call you, and you will answer His call with (words of) His praise, and you will think you tarried but a little while!" [17:49-52]

Think over this last verse, how it answers all their questions in detail. They asked, "What! When we are reduced to bones and dust, shall we be really raised up (to be) a new creation?" They were told that if there were no Creator or Lord for them, as they claimed, how is it that they were not like stone, iron or something harder than they which death could not touch. If they say that they have not been created to abide forever, why do they rule out that their Creator can create them again? The argument can be understood in a different way. It may be taken to mean that had they been stone, iron or any harder thing, even then it would not be difficult for Allah to destroy them and create them again. And if Allah can do that with such things, He can do it with men much more easily. Their next question was who will recreate them when their bodies perish and disintegrate. They were told that He Who created them first will create them again. When they were beaten on all these counts they asked when it would come. They were told it may come soon!

Similar arguments have been advanced elsewhere in the Qur'ān, for example, "And (man) makes comparisons for us, and forgets his own creation. He says, 'Who can give life to (dry) bones when they are decomposed?' Say, He will give them life Who created them the first time! For He is well-versed in every kind of creation – the same Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, so that lo! you kindle with it (your own fires)! Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof? Yea, indeed! For He is the Creator Supreme, of skill and knowledge infinite! Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is, 'Be,' and it is! So glory to Him in Whose hands is the dominion of all things. And to Him will you be all brought back" [36:78-83].

The most learned and the most competent man on earth, however he tries, cannot put forward an argument better or even as good, as this is language so precise and clear. Look at it. Before beginning the argument Allah makes the remark: how is it that one doubts His power to revive the dead and "forgets his own creation".

He then states the argument, "Say: He will raise it up Who created it for the first time." He holds up the first creation as proof of the second creation. Everyone would accept that whoever did the first can do the second, and if he were not able to do the former would not be able to do the latter. And since creation requires that the Creator have the power as well as the knowledge of the things He wants to create, He said, "He is well-versed in every kind of creation" [36:79]. That is, He knows each and every detail of the first creation concerning its form as well as matter. He also knows all the details of the second creation. No one who knows everything in detail, and has all powers in his hand, would find it difficult to revive the dry bones.

Another undefeatable proof is given after that. Another objection from another atheist is visualized. When bones decompose they are cold and dry, but for life to appear, the material has to be warm and moist. This objection is refuted in the next verse, "One Who produces for you fire out of the green tree when you kindle therewith (your own fires)" [36:86]. That is, One Who can produce such a hot and dry thing as fire from a thing which is diametrically opposite to it, namely a green plant, wet and cold, and has full control over the material, will have no difficulty in raising to life bones that have decomposed.

This point is reinforced by the next argument, which draws upon the fact that Allah has created things that are far greater than man. The One Who has created things greater than man will find it easier to create man. One who can carry heaps of gold will find a small penny far easier to carry. He said, "Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof?" [36:81]. That is, Allah has created the heavens and the earth which are so big, so vast and so wonderful, it will be certainly far easier for Him to bring to life a few bones that are decomposed, and recreate man. He has made the same point elsewhere: "Assuredly the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater matter than the creation of men. Yet most men understand not" [40:57]. Also, "Have they not seen that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth and was not wearied by their creation, is able to give life to the dead? Aye, He is verily able to do all things" [46:33]. Then He emphasizes the matter. His actions are not like the actions of others. To do anything, man needs various tools and instruments, helpers and assistants; in addition, they also have themselves to work very hard. Without these they cannot produce anything. But Allah needs none

of these things. When He wants to create anything, He is simply to will it and say, "Be," and it comes into being as He wills.[519]

Then Allah concludes the argument by saying that everything is absolutely under His control, He does what He wills. Therefore, "You will be returned to Him" [36:83]. This point He has elaborated at other places, for example, "Does man think that he will be left uncontrolled (without purpose)? Was he not a drop of sperm emitted (in lowly form)? Then he became a leech-like clot. Then Allah made and fashioned him in due proportion, and made of him two sexes, male and female. Has not He (the same) the power to give life to the dead?" [75:36-40]. He has made it clear that He cannot let man be without rules and laws, and without rewarding or punishing him on account of his obedience or violation. His wisdom and power just cannot allow it, as He has said, "Did you then think that We had created you in jest, and that you will not be brought back to us (for account)...?" [23:115]. That is, when He has created man in so many stages, a drop of liquid, then a clot of coagulated blood, then a (fetus) lump; then formed his ears and eyes, senses and faculties, bones and arteries, muscles and nerves, and fashioned him into perfect shape, and brought him out in a beautiful form – how will He not be able to recreate him and raise him to life again? How will His wisdom and providence leave Him without taking account of His deeds? Certainly, it would not be in accord with His wisdom and power. Look at this wonderful argument, how concisely and clearly it has been stated! It could not be stated in a more concise fashion, nor could anyone imagine anything clearer.

There are many more statements in the Qur'ān in the same vein, for example, "Mankind! If you have a doubt about the resurrection, consider that We created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of a leech-like clot, then out of a lump of flesh partly formed and partly unformed... Verily the Hour will come; there can be no doubt about it, and Allah will raise up all who are in the graves" [22:5-7]. Or, "We did create man from a quintessence (of clay); then we placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood, then of that clot We made a (fetus) lump, then We made out of that lump bones, and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the Best to create! After that, at length you will die. Again, on the Day of Judgment, you will be raised up" [23:12-16]. And, telling how He maintained the people of the cave

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[519]See also Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 17:241-261; Ibn Taymīyyah, *Dār Ta'āruḍ al-'Aql wa an-Naql*, vol. 1, pp. 30-35.

in sleep for three hundred solar years, or three hundred nine lunar years, He said, "Thus did We make their case known to the people, that they might know that the promise of Allah is true and that there can be no doubt about the Hour of Judgment" [18:21].

Those who believe that bodies are formed of atoms find it difficult to account for the resurrection. They are of two views. Some say that these atoms are first destroyed and then retrieved; others say that they are first scattered and then collected. The objection that has been raised against them is that, suppose a man is eaten by an animal, and that animal is eaten by another man, it means that if the atomic particles of the latter are retrieved those of the former cannot be. Another objection is that since man dissipates and re-forms continuously, which atoms of his will be retrieved, those that constituted him when he died? If the answer is in the affirmative, it will mean that the resurrected person will be a weak person, which conflicts with the texts. But if they are some other atoms, then which others? For every conglomeration of theirs can be a candidate and there is no way to choose one and reject the other. Some people say that in every human being there is a part which does not decompose, and in case he is eaten up by an animal that part does not pass on into it. But this is wrong. Everybody knows that the whole of a man decomposes and nothing survives. Since the efforts to explain resurrection on the hypothesis that bodies are formed of atoms miserably fails, some philosophers deny the resurrection of the body altogether.

The view which the Elders and all reasonable beings have held on this issue is that bodies constantly change from one state to another, and in the end mix into the earth. It is out of this earth that Allah will create man again. As in the first creation, he passed through various stages – from sperm to a leech-like clot, then a lump of meat, then bones and flesh, and finally complete man – in the same way he will be created the second time. When all his body disintegrates and nothing remains, except the coccyx of the tailbone, Allah will create him out of it again. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections it is confirmed that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Every part of man disintegrates except the coccyx of the tailbone. From it he was created first, and from it he will be reconstructed."[520] He (peace be on him) is also reported to have said, "The sky will pour down

[520]Al-Bukhārī, 4814, 4935; Muslim 2955, 142; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4743; An-Nasā'ī, 4:111-112; Aḥmad, 2:322, 428, 499; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4226.

water like human semen, and people will grow from the graves like vegetables."[521]

This means that the first and the second creations are two tokens of a type similar in some respects and different in others. Resurrection is like the first creation, except that its requisites are different. Man will be recreated from the material into which every part of his being except the coccyx of his tail disintegrates. This will not, however, affect his identity, just as it does not affect the identity of a person when he is a child and then an old man changing in the process all the while, or the identity of a plant if it is a sapling and then a full-blown tree. However, the second life will be different from the first. In Paradise particularly, men will be as tall as their first father, Adam, sixty cubits tall, as is recorded in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s.[522] Some narrations mention their girth as seven spans. They will be living there forever, safe, without any suffering, unlike their lives here which are filled with displeasures.

As for the recompensing of deeds, Allah has said, "He is the Master of the Day of Judgment (*Yawm ad-Dīn*)" [1:3], and, "On that Day Allah will pay them back all their just deeds, and they will realize that Allah is the (very) Truth that makes all things manifest" [24:25]. *Dīn* means recompense or retribution. People say, "*kamā tadīn tudān*," (as you judge others so are you judged). Allah has also said, "as a recompense for their deeds" [32:17, 46:14, 56:24]; "as a fitting recompense" [78:26]; "Those who do good will have ten times as much to their credit; those who do evil will only be recompensed according to their evil. No wrong will be done unto them" [6:160]; "If any do good, good will accrue to them therefrom; and they will be secure from terror that Day. And if any do evil, their faces will be thrown headlong into the Fire. Do you receive a reward other than what you have earned by your deeds?" [27:89-90]; "If someone does good, the reward to him is better than his deed; but if someone does evil the evildoers are only punished (to the extent) of their deeds" [28:84], and so on.

Abū Dharr reported that the Prophet (peace be on him) narrated from Allah, "My servants! These are only your deeds that I count for you and will recompense in full. If you find it good you should be grateful to Allah; but if you find it otherwise, you should blame

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[521]Part of a long *ḥadīth*, Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 9761; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 4:598-600. But the chain of the *ḥadīth* is broken. See Al-Haythamī, *Majmū' az-Zawā'id*, vol. 10, pp. 329-330. Al-Albānī has declared it weak.

[522]Al-Bukhārī, 3326, 6227; Muslim, 2841.

none but yourselves."[523] We will return, God willing, to this point shortly.

The author states, "We believe in resurrection after death and in recompense of deeds on the Day of Judgment, the reading of the books and the reward and punishment for deeds." (These have all been mentioned by Allah in the Qur'ān.) Allah says, "On that Day will the (great) Event come to pass, and the sky will be rent asunder, for it will that Day be flimsy, and the angels will be on its sides, and eight will that Day bear the Throne of your Lord above them. That Day will you be brought to Judgment: not an act of yours that you hide will be hidden" [69:15-18]. "Mankind! Verily you are toiling on towards your Lord – painfully toiling – but you will meet Him.

Then, whoever is given his record in his right hand, soon will his account be taken by an easy reckoning, and he will turn to his people rejoicing. But whoever is given his record behind his back, soon will he cry for perdition, but he will enter a blazing Fire. Truly, did he go about among his people rejoicing! Truly did he think that he would not have to return to us! Nay, nay, for his Lord was ever watchful of him" [84:6-15]. "And they will be marshaled before your Lord in ranks (with the announcement), 'Now have you come to Us (bare) as We created you first.' And the book (of deeds) will be placed before you; and you will see the sinful in great terror because of what is (recorded) therein. They will say: 'Ah! woe to us! What a book is this! It leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof!' They will find all that they did placed before them. And not one will your Lord treat with injustice" [18:48-49]. "One day the earth will be changed to a different earth, and so will be the heavens, and (men) will be marshalled forth before Allah, the One, the Irresistible.

And you will see the sinners that day bound together in fetters, their garments of liquid pitch and their faces covered with Fire, that Allah may requite each soul according to its deserts, and verily Allah is swift in calling to account" [14:48-50]. "Raised high above ranks, He is the Lord of the Throne. By His command does He send the spirit (of inspiration) to any of His servants He pleases, that it may warn (men) of the Day whereon they will (all) come forth. Not a single thing concerning them is hidden from Allah. Whose will be the dominion that Day? That of Allah, the One, the Irresistible! That Day will every soul be requited for what it earned; no injustice will there be that Day, for Allah is swift in taking account" [40:15-19]. "And fear the Day when you will be brought back to Allah. Then

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[523]Muslim, *Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, 2577, mentioned earlier.

will every soul be paid what it earned, and none will be dealt with unjustly" [2:281].

Al-Bukhārī has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* a *ḥadīth* reported by 'Ā'ishah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "On the Day of Judgment, whoever is called to account is doomed." She said, "Messenger of Allah, has Allah not said, 'Then whoever is given his record in his right hand, soon will his account be taken by an easy reckoning (84:7-8]?" the Prophet said, "This will be only a presentation of the deeds (*'arḍ*). But whoever is questioned in detail on the Day of Judgment will be punished."[524] That is, if anyone's account is scrutinized he will be punished, and rightly so. However, Allah may forgive and pardon. We will return to this point later, God willing.

There is another *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "People will be stupefied on the Day of Resurrection. I will be the first to regain consciousness. Lo and behold! Moses will be there, holding the leg of the Throne. I will not know whether he regained consciousness before me or whether he was not stunned because he had already suffered that experience at Mount Sinai."[525] This will happen when Allah comes for judgment. The earth will be illuminated with His light and people will be stunned.

Someone might ask, "What then do you say about the *ḥadīth* that "the people will be stupefied on the Day of Resurrection. I will be the first one to come out of the earth. I will find Moses holding on to the legs of the Throne?"[526]

It is said that this is definitely how the *ḥadīth* has been narrated, and that is the source of the problem. But what happened is that the narrator combined together the wordings of two *aḥādīth*. One *ḥadīth* is, "People will be in a stupor on the day of Resurrection and I will be the first to regain my consciousness," as was stated earlier, and the second states, "I will be the first one to be brought out of the earth on the Day of Resurrection." the narrator combined these two *aḥādīth*. This was pointed out by Abū Al-Ḥajāj Al-Mizzī, followed by Sheikh Shams ad-Dīn Ibn Al-Qayyīm and our Sheikh 'Imad ad-Dīn Ibn Kathīr, may Allah have mercy on them.

Similarly some of the narrators were confused. It states, "I will not know if he regained consciousness before me or if he was from

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[524]Al-Bukhārī, 103, 4939, 6536, 6537; Muslim, *Al-Jannah*, 2876; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Janā'iz*, 3093; At-Tirmidhī, *Tafsīr*, 3334; Aḥmad, 6:47, 91, 108, 127.

[525]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

[526]Al-Bukhārī, 2412, 3298, 4638, 6916, 7427; Muslim, 2374.

those exempted by Allah." the correct version that the narrators report is the first one mentioned earlier. It has the correct meaning because the stupefying will occur when Allah comes to His servants for Judgment. If Moses does not fall into a stupor with them, it will be because he had already done so when Allah exposed His grandeur to the mountain and caused it to be crushed. That stupor when Allah displayed His grandeur was in lieu of the stupor that people fall into at Allah's grandeur on the Day of Judgment. Consider that very important meaning and do not neglect it.[527]

Imām Aḥmad, At-Tirmidhī and Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Ad-Dunyā have reported from Al-Ḥassan that Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī heard the Prophet (peace be on him) say, "On the Day of Judgment there will be three presentations. In two of them, people will offer arguments and excuses, and in the third they will go through their records. Whoever is given his record in his right hand, his account will be taken in an easy reckoning, and he will be sent to Paradise. But whoever is given his record in his left hand will be sent to the Fire."[528]

Ibn Abī Ad-Dunyā records the following lines of poetry from Ibn Al-Mubārak on this point:

> When the open records fly to the hands,
> they have the secrets and are looked at.
> How can you be heedless when the news is happening, and
> very soon; you do not know what will happen.
> Whether in Paradise and victory without end,
> Or Hell, and it will leave nothing (without burning it).
> It will take them down sometimes and raise them.
> Seeking to leave its sadness, they will be struck down.
> Their crying will be endless, their petition not treated kindly.
> Polite speech and their fear will never help.
> The knowing must benefit from his knowledge ere he dies.
> Some in the Fire have asked to return (to do good deeds)
> but they will not be returned.

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[527] Al-Albānī points out that there is no need for the explanation given by the commentator. The second stupor refers to the stupor that occurs at resurrection, which is mentioned in the verse, and it is not the stupor that occurs when Allah appears for judgment. Therefore, there is actually nothing wrong with the way the *ḥadīth* appears in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

[528] At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2427; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4277, Aḥmad, 4:414. At-Tirmidhī has observed that Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣrī, who narrated the *ḥadīth* from Abū Mūsa Al-Ash'arī, did not meet Abū Mūsā. The *ḥadīth* is weak.

We believe in the *Ṣirāṭ*. The *Ṣirāṭ* is a bridge over Hell. When people leave the place where they are to be assembled, they will come to a dark region beside the Bridge. 'Ā'ishah said that the Messenger (peace be on him) was asked where people will be when the earth and the heavens are changed into different earth and heavens. He said, "They will be in darkness beside the Bridge."[529] At that time the hypocrites will be separated from the Believers, who will go ahead and leave them behind. A wall will be placed between them that will stop them from reaching them.

Al-Bayhaqī has recorded a *ḥadīth* reported by Masrūq from 'Abdullah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah will gather people on the Day of Judgment... Their light will shine more or less brilliantly according to their deeds, some lights will expand like a mountain, and some even more. Some people will have their lights in their right hands as big as a date palm, and some will have a comparatively small light. The smallest light will be a light on the big toe of someone's foot that will be flickering on and off. When it shines he will walk, but when it goes off he will stop. He will pass along with others across the Bridge, which will be as sharp as a sword and very slippery. They will be asked to walk across according to their light. Some of them will pass over it like a shooting star and some like a wind; some will cross it in the twinkling of an eye, and some will run across it, each according to his deeds.

"When one that has a light on the big toe of his foot crosses the Bridge, sometimes one of his hands will quiver and he will try to balance with the other, and sometimes one of his feet will stagger and he will try to hold himself up with the other. He will not be able to save his sides from the flames of the Fire. In the end, however, they will all be saved, and loudly they will shout, 'Praise be to Allah Who has saved us from you (the Fire) after it was shown to us. Indeed, He has done for us a favor that He had done for none else.'"[530]

The scholars differ as to the meaning of the verse, "There is not one of you but will approach it" [19:71]. The strongest and most transparent opinion is that it refers to passing over the Bridge. Allah then says, "Then We will rescue those who kept from evil, and leave the evildoers crouching there" [19:72]. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is recorded that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "By

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[529]Part of a long *ḥadīth*, Muslim, Al-Ḥayḍ, 315.

[530]Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 2:376-377, and its chain is good. See also Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 9763.

the One in Whose hand is my soul, the Fire will not touch any of the people who gave the pledge of allegiance under the tree." Ḥafṣah asked him, "Messenger of Allah, didn't Allah say, 'There is not one of you but will approach it'?" He said, "But didn't you hear Him say, 'Then We will rescue those who kept from evil, and leave the evildoers crouching there'?"[531]

The Prophet (peace be on him), therefore, is saying that approaching the Fire does not mean entering it. Being saved from evil does not imply that one is touched by it. It does, though, imply meeting its causes. For example, if someone seeks his enemy to kill him but is not able to do so, one says, "Allah saved him from him." In that fashion, Allah says, "And when Our commandment came to pass We saved Hūd" [11:58]; "So when Our commandment came to pass, We saved Ṣāliḥ" [11:66]; and, "And when Our commandment came to pass, We saved Shu'ayb" [11:94]. The punishment did not touch any of them but it afflicted others. If it were not for Allah bestowing on them the means of being saved, they would have been afflicted with what the others were afflicted with.

The same is true for passing over the Hell-fire. They will pass over it on the Bridge and Allah will then save those who were pious and will leave the evildoers there crouching. In the *ḥadīth* just mentioned, the Prophet (peace be on him) explained that the "approaching" refers to passing over the Hell-fire on the Bridge.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Naṣr Al-Wa'ilī recorded on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "Teach the people my Sunnah even if they dislike it. If you wish not to stay on the Bridge even for the blinking of an eye, do not invent anything in the religion according to your opinion." Al-Qurṭubī mentioned this *ḥadīth* in *At-Tadhkirah*.[532]

Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn Salmān Al-Najjād recorded from Ya'la Ibn Munīyyah that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "The Fire will say to a Believer on the Day of Resurrection, 'Pass over, Believer; your light extinguishes my flames.'"[533]

As for the Balance (*Mizān*), we believe in the Balance. Allah has referred to it in various verses of the Qur'ān, for example, "We will set up scales (*mawāzīn*) of justice for the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. And if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it (to

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[531]Muslim, 2496, Aḥmad, 6:285, 326.
[532]Al-Albānī has stated that this *ḥadīth* is a fabrication.
[533]Abū Nu'aym, Al-Ḥilya, 9:329; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 22:668. It is a weak *ḥadīth*.

account). And enough are We to take account" [21:47]; and, "Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy will attain salvation, but those whose balance is light will be those who have lost their souls; in Hell will they abide" [23:102-103].

Al-Qurṭubī has said that scholars think that when the reckoning is finished, deeds will be put in the Balance. Since weighing is meant for determining reward or punishment, it will take place after the reckoning.[534] The reckoning will be for determining deeds, and the weighing will be for determining the value of the deeds so that the reward or penalty may be fixed. The word mawāzīn in verse 21:47 quoted above is plural, meaning that there will be a number of balances there. It may also mean that there will be different kinds of balances for weighing different kinds of deeds. True knowledge, however, is with Allah.

There are many *aḥādīth* on the subject that make it quite clear that the Balance will have two scales visible to the eyes. Imām Aḥmad has recorded a *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān Al-Ḥubulī, from 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr, that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah will pick out a person from my *ummah* from all the creation, ask him to step forward, place before him ninety-nine registers recording his deeds, each register as long as his eyes can see, and ask him, 'Do you deny any item mentioned in these registers? Have my scribes wronged you in any way?' He will say, 'No, my Lord.' Allah will then ask, 'Have you any excuse to offer or any good deed to mention which is not here?' He will say, 'I have nothing to say, my Lord.' Allah will say, 'No, you have a good thing to mention. There will be no injustice to you this day.' A card will then be produced which will have, 'I witness that there is no god except Allah, and that Muḥammad is his servant and messenger.' It will be handed to him, but he will wonder and say, 'What can this do in the presence of so many evil records?' Allah will say, 'You will not be wronged.' Then all the registers will be placed on one scale and that card will be placed on the other scale and it will outweigh them. Nothing can outweigh the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate."[535] This is recorded by At-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Ibn Abī Ad-Dunyā from Al-Layth. In At-

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[534] Al-Qurṭubī, *At-Tadhkirah*, p. 309.

[535] At-Tirmidhī, 2639; Ibn Mājah, 4300; Aḥmad, 2:213; Ibn Ḥibban, 2524; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:6, 529. The last sentence of this *ḥadīth* is incorrect and is only recorded by Aḥmad. It should be, "Nothing can outweigh the name of Allah."

Tirmidhi's version the last words are, "Nothing can outweigh the name of Allah."[536]

The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Balances will be set up on the Day of Judgment, and men will be brought and put on the scale."[537] This means that men will also be weighed along with their deeds. Al-Bukhārī has recorded a *ḥadīth* from Abū Hurayrah in support of this *ḥadīth*. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "On the Day of Judgment, a very large and heavy man will be brought, but in Allah's sight his weight will be less than that of the wing of a mosquito. If you like you may recall the verse, 'We will not give them any weight on the Day of Judgment' [18:105]."[538] Imām Aḥmad has recorded a *ḥadīth* wherein it states that one day Ibn Mas'ūd was trying to pluck a twig of an arak tree in order to brush his teeth. His shanks, which were very thin, were exposed by the wind, and some people burst into laughter at them. The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) asked, "Why are you laughing?" They said, "Prophet of Allah, we are laughing at how thin Ibn Mas'ūd's shanks are." He retorted, "By Allah, they will be heavier than Mount Uḥud in the Balance."[539]

Actions themselves will be weighed in the Balance. Muslim has recorded a *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Mālik Al-Ash'arī that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Cleanliness is half of faith, and the words, *al-ḥamdu li Allah* (all praise is for Allah) will fill the Balance."[540] the last *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* is, "Two sentences are light on the tongue, but they are very dear to Allah and heavy on the scales: *Subḥāna Allah wa bi-ḥamdihi* (glory to Allah and praise to Him) and *Subḥāna Allah Al-'Aẓim* (Glory be to Allah, the Majestic)."[541]

Al-Bayhaqī has recorded a *ḥadīth* reported by Anas Ibn Mālik that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "On the Day of Judgment men will be brought before the Balance, and an angel will weigh them. Whenever a man tilts the scale the angel will shout, 'Happy is this man. Never will he be unhappy ever after,' and all the people

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[536]These words occur in the *ḥadīth* of At-Tirmidhī and Al-Ḥakīm.

[537]Aḥmad, 2:221-222. But the *ḥadīth* is not authentic; for one of its transmitters is Ibn Lahi'ah, who has a weak memory.

[538]Al-Bukhārī, *Tafsīr,* 4729; Muslim, *Ṣifat al-Munafiqīn*, 2785.

[539]Aḥmad, 1:420-421; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 8452. See also Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 12:113; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:317.

[540]Muslim, *Aṭ-Ṭahārah*, 223; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3512; An-Nasā'ī, 5:5-6; Ibn Mājah, 270; Aḥmad, 5:342, 343, 334.

[541]Al-Bukhārī, 6404; 6687, 7563; Muslim, *Adh-Dhikr wa ad-Du'ā'*, 2694; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3463; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Adab*, 3806; Aḥmad, 2:232.

around will hear it. But when a man's scales goes up, the angel will shout, 'Doomed is this man! Never will he be happy ever after,' and everyone will hear it."[542]

In view of these *aḥādīth*, the objection of an obstinate rejector carries no weight that actions are incidents not bodies, and therefore cannot be objects to be weighed. Allah, though, can change the incidents into bodies and put them on the scale, as was shown earlier. This is also suggested in a *ḥadīth* which Imām Aḥmad has recorded from Abū Hurayrah, in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Death will be brought in the form of a ram covered with dust and placed between Paradise and Hell. A call will be given to the people of Paradise, who will raise their heads and look. A call will also be given to the people of Hell, who will raise their heads and look. They will think that perhaps the time for relief has arrived. The ram will be killed and the announcement will be made: 'Life forever. There is no more death.'"[543] Al-Bukhārī has also recorded this *ḥadīth* with some difference in wording.[544] All this proves that the deeds, the doers and the records of the deeds all will be weighed, and that the Balance will have two scales. Further details of how these things will happen are known only to Allah.

Our duty is to believe in what the Prophet (peace be on him) has said about the Unseen without adding or subtracting anything. Woe to those who deny the setting of the balances on the Day of Judgment, of which the Prophet has spoken. They fail to see the reason behind it and therefore deny it. They say that balances are required for weighing groceries. I am afraid that these people will be given no weight on the Day of Judgment. Balances will be set up in order to demonstrate Allah's justice to all the people, although no one more readily accepts excuses than Allah. This is also the reason He sends messengers to give good tidings and to issue warnings to the people. There may be other reasons, too, that we do not know. You may see the point if you reflect upon what transpired between the angels and Allah when He told them, "I will create on earth a viceregent. They (the angels) said, 'Would you place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood, while we celebrate Your prayers and glorify Your holy name?' Allah said, 'I know what you know not'" [2:30]. At another place He has said, "Of knowledge there is only a little that is communicated to you" [17:85].

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[542] Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilya*, vol. 4, p. 174. Al-Albānī has called it a fabrication.
[543] Aḥmad, 2:423; Ad-Dārimī, *Sunan*, 2:329.
[544] Al-Bukhārī, 4730; Muslim, 2949; At-Tirmidhī, 3156.

In the earlier discussion on the Fountain (*Ḥawḍ*), we have quoted Al-Qurṭubī as saying that the Fountain will come before the Balance and the Balance will come before the Bridge. In the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s, it states, "When the Believers cross the *Ṣirāt* they will be detained at an arched bridge (*qanṭarah*) between Paradise and Hell. Every wrongdoer will pay for the wrong he has done. When they are purged of all evils and cleansed, they will be allowed into Paradise."[545] As Al-Qurṭubī has said, this *qantarah* will be the second bridge which the Believers will have to cross. However, no one will fall off this bridge.[546] Allah knows best.

(91) Paradise and Hell have been created and will never perish or pass away. Allah created them before the world. He allotted some people for each. Those whom He allotted for Paradise, He did so out of His bounty for them. And those whom He allotted for Hell, He allotted because it was required by His justice. Everyone will do what has been chosen for him, and will go to the place for which he has been created. Good and evil both have been determined for each and every person.

The Ahl as-Sunnah are agreed that Paradise and Hell have been created and are in existence at this moment. This is what they have always believed.[547] The Mu'tazilah and the Qadarīyyah were the first to deny this; they instead said that Allah will create them on the Day of Resurrection. What led them to this view was their false assumption that Allah was subject to a code of law which they had laid down, that He must do certain things and avoid others. They conceived of Him on the pattern of His creatures and compared His actions with theirs. Following the line of Jahm, they also negated Allah's attributes. Every text that conflicted with the code they had formulated for Allah, they rejected or interpreted against its intent. Furthermore, they denounced as innovators anyone who objected to their beliefs.

The Qur'ān has referred to Paradise many times, such as, "It has been prepared for the God-fearing" [3:33], and "It has been prepared for those who believe in Allah and His messengers" [57:21]. The Qur'ān has also referred to Hell, such as "It has been

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[545]Al-Bukhārī, 2440, 6535; Aḥmad, 3:13, 63, 74. It was not recorded by Muslim.

[546]Al-Qurṭubī, *At-Tadhkirah*, 339.

[547]Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Hadī al-Arwaḥ ilā Bilād al-Afraḥ* (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmīyyah), pp. 11-18.

prepared for the infidels" [3:13], and "Truly, Hell is a place of ambush or a place of destination for the transgressors" [78:21-2].

The Messenger (peace be on him) has seen them and Allah has referred to his seeing Paradise in these words, "And indeed he saw him (Gabriel) at a second descent near the lote-tree beyond which none may pass. Near it is the Garden of Abode" [53:13-5]. The Prophet (peace be on him) did see the lote-tree beyond which none could pass and did see the Garden of Abode. Describing his night journey, as it is recorded in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s, the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Then Gabriel took me to the lote-tree which no one can pass. It was draped in too many colors to be described. Then I entered Paradise and, lo and behold, it was covered with high-rising domes studded with pearls and its floor was of musk."[548] The two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s have another *ḥadīth*, reported by 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "When any one of you dies his seat in Paradise or in Hell is shown to him morning and evening. If he is a man of Paradise, he is shown a seat in Paradise, but if he is a man of Hell he is shown a seat in Hell, and he will be told, 'This is your place,' until Allah raises him on the Day of Resurrection."[549]

We have previously mentioned the *ḥadīth* which has been reported by Al-Barā' Ibn 'Azīb. It says, "A call will be given from the heaven. If My servant tells the truth, make for him a bed from Paradise and open for him a door towards it, so that he may have the air and the scent of Paradise."[550] the same point is made in the *ḥadīth* reported by Anas which we have quoted earlier.

Muslim has recorded a *ḥadīth* in which 'Ā'ishah first spoke of an eclipse of the sun that took place at the time of the Prophet (peace be on him) and said that the Prophet said, "I see from this place where I am standing everything which you have been promised. I even see that I plucked a fruit of Paradise when you saw me stepping forward. I also saw the Hell-fire, burning itself, when you saw me step back."[551] The *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim also contain a *ḥadīth* which 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās reported, and the following is Al-Bukhārī's wording. He mentioned that once, when

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548 Part of the *ḥadīth* on ascension reported by Anas that was mentioned earlier.

549 Al-Bukhārī, 1379, 3240, 6515; Muslim, *Al-Jannah*, 2866; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Janā'iz*, 1072; An-Nasā'ī, 4:106-7; Aḥmad, 2:16, 51, 113, 123; Mālik, *Al-Janā'iz*, 1:239.

550 Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

551 Part of a long *ḥadīth*, Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 901; Al-Bukhārī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1212; An-Nasā'ī, 3:130-132.

there was an eclipse of the sun, the Prophet (peace be on him) stepped forward, stretched his hand to grasp something and then retraced his steps. When he was asked about it he said, "I saw Paradise and intended to pluck a bunch of its grapes. If I had succeeded, you would be eating from it until the end of the world. I then saw the Fire. Never did I see a scene more horrible than what I saw today. I saw that most of its inhabitants are women." Someone asked, "Why, Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "It is because they are ungrateful." "To whom are they ungrateful?" he was further asked. "They are ungrateful to their husbands. They do not recognize the kindness you show them. You may go on doing good to them all the time, but if once they experience something unpleasant from you, they will say that they never had any good from you."[552]

Muslim recorded from the *ḥadīth* of Anas that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "By the One in Whose hand is my life, if you had seen what I saw you would laugh less and weep more." He was asked what had he seen. He said, "I saw Paradise and the Fire."[553]

In the *Sunan* collections and the *Muwaṭṭa* there is the *ḥadīth* reported by Ka'b Ibn Mālik in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The soul of a Believer is like a bird that perches on a tree of Paradise until Allah returns it to its body on the Day of Resurrection."[554] This is a clear statement that the souls enter Paradise before the Day of Judgment.

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, the *Sunan* and *Musnad* collections, there is the *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Hurayrah in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "When Allah created Paradise and Hell, He sent Gabriel to Paradise and commanded him to see what was provided therein for its people. He went and saw it and what Allah had provided therein for its people. He returned and said, 'By Your Majesty, no one will hear about it without entering it.' Then Allah commanded that Paradise be surrounded by difficulties. He then told Gabriel to look at it and what had been prepared for its people. He look at it and returned, saying, 'By Your Majesty, I am afraid no one will ever enter it.' Then he was commanded to visit Hell and see what was cast into it for its people. He visited it and saw that it was boiling up fiercely, one part smashing into another. He returned and said, 'By Your Majesty, no one who comes to hear about it will ever enter it.' Thereupon Allah commanded and it was covered with

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[552] Al-Bukhārī, 1052; Muslim, 907.

[553] Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 426; An-Nasā'ī, 3:83.

[554] Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

pleasurable things. He then told Gabriel to visit it again. He visited and returned and said, 'By Your Majesty, I am afraid no one will be able to be saved from it, but all will enter it.'"[555] There are many *aḥādīth* on the subject.

Some people say that the Paradise which has been promised is the same Paradise in which Adam was kept before he was sent down to earth. If this is correct, it clearly means that Paradise is in existence. The difference of opinion over that question is well known.

Others say that Paradise does not exist at this moment, for if it existed, it would be destroyed on the Last Day on which everything will perish, as the Qur'ān says, "Everything (that exists) will perish except His own countenance" [28:88]; and, "Every soul will taste death" [3:185]. At-Tirmidhī has recorded a *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn Mas'ūd that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I saw Abraham the night I was taken on a journey. He said, 'Muḥammad, speak my greetings to your *ummah*, and tell them that the ground of Paradise is good and its water is sweet, but it has no plants. If you want to have plants there, say "Glory to Allah", "Praise be to Allah", "There is no god but Allah", and "Allah is great" '"[556]

This *ḥadīth*, At-Tirmidhī says, is fair (*hasan*) but isolated (*gharīb*). He has recorded another *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Az-Zubayr, through Jabir, that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever says 'Glory to Allah and praise to Him,' a date tree is planted for him in Paradise."[557] At-Tirmidhi's evaluation of this *ḥadīth* is that it is *hasan ṣaḥīḥ*. Some say that had Paradise already been created it would not have been barren and lacking in plants, as otherwise this *ḥadīth* would have no meaning. As a further argument they quote the verse mentioning Pharaoh's wife's supplication, "My Lord, build for me in nearness to You a house in Paradise" [66:11].

In reply, we will say that if they mean that Paradise does not exist at the present in the same way the Trumpet has not been

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[555] Abu-Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4744; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2563; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Īmān wa an-Nudhūr*, 7:3; Aḥmad, 2:332, 354, 373. Its chain is *ḥasan*. Muslim did not record it in its entirety.

[556] At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3456. But the *ḥadīth* is weak, as one of its transmitters, 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Isḥāq Ibn Harith Al-Wasiṭī, is weak. See Al-Haythamī, *Majmū' az-Zawā'id*, 10:98.

[557] At-Tirmidhī, 3460, 3461. The transmitters of this *ḥadīth* are reliable; however, one of them, Abū Az-Zubayr, has committed tadlīs. At-Tirmidhī has rated it *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ gharīb*. Ibn Ḥibban has recorded it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2335.

sounded and the people have not been raised from the graves at the moment, they are wrong. The texts that we have quoted, and others that we did not mention, contradict their view. But if they mean to say that not all that Allah has promised to the people of Paradise is yet created, and that He will be creating many more things there, even after the faithful will have entered it, this is true and cannot be refuted. The texts they have produced support it.

But their inference from the verse, "Everything will perish except His countenance" [28:88], that Paradise and Hell are non-existent is not correct. It is as incorrect as to infer from it that Paradise and Hell will terminate and their people will perish some time in the future. It is misinterpreting the verse. The correct interpretation which scholars make is that the words, "everything will perish" means that everything that Allah has deemed to perish will perish. Paradise and Hell are not included in this category; they have been created to abide and last forever. The same is true of Allah's Throne, which is above Paradise. Some say that it refers to His dominion, which will not be destroyed. Others say it means, "except what His countenance wills." Some say that when Allah revealed, "Every thing that is thereon will pass away" [55:26], the angels said, "The people of the earth will be destroyed," and they desired them to stay. Then Allah informed them that all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth will die. He said, "Everything will perish except His countenance" [28:88], as He is the Living, Who does not die. The angels were then assured of death. The people who say so make such an interpretation in order to reconcile the different texts that definitively point to the everlasting nature of Paradise and Hell, as we will discuss shortly, God willing.

As for the statement that Paradise and Hell "will never perish or disappear," this is the belief of the majority of scholars of all times, early as well as later. Some of them, however, say that Paradise will abide forever but Hell will terminate. Both these views have been mentioned in commentaries on the Qur'ān and other works.[558]

The person who first said that both Paradise and Hell will perish was Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān, the leader of the negators of Allah's attributes. No Companion, Successor or leading scholar of the Ahl as-Sunnah has ever said that. As one body they denounce Jahm and call him infidel for holding this view. This is known all over the

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[558] In his footnotes to this work, Al-Albānī points out that it has never been authentically narrated from any of the Elders that they believed that the Hell-fire will come to an end.

world. What led Jahm to this stance was his assumption that a contingent thing is not everlasting. This is the principle on which misguided theologians build up their argument for the contingency of the world.

Jahm believes that what is not without a beginning in the past cannot go on without an end in the future. On these grounds he rules out the eternity of divine action in the future as well as in the past. Abū Al-Hudhayl Al-ʻAllāf, the leader of the Muʻtazilah, agreed with him on this point, but he drew the implication that the people of Paradise and Hell will cease to move one day and will enter into a state of perpetual rest where none of them will be able to move. We have already referred to the controversy over the regress of events in past and in future, and related it to the eternity of divine action. We have said that Allah is the Lord from eternity, that He has been doing from eternity what He has willed. He is Everlasting, Ever-Knowing and Ever-Powerful. It is not possible to think that at first He could not act and then began to act without anything happening there, or that His inactivity ended at a particular time and He became active at that time and not before. This is plainly false and its falseness can hardly be over-emphasized.

That Paradise will last forever is something known of necessity. The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) clearly enunciated it. Allah has said, "And those who are blessed will be in Paradise. They will dwell therein for all the time that the heavens and the earth endure except as your Lord wills: a gift without break" [11:108]. That is, it will not end. This is not contradicted by the exception clause, "except as your Lord wills." There are different explanations from the Elders concerning this exception. Some say it is in reference to their stay in the Hell-fire, for those who spend some time there and then come out of it. Hence, it is not in reference to all the inhabitants of Paradise. Some say it is in reference to the period they will stay for judgment, or, others say, the duration they will remain in their graves. Some Elders have also said that the exception only holds up a theoretical possibility which will not be realized, as in the statement, "I will strike you unless I see fit otherwise," but you do not see fit otherwise and you have determined to strike.

Others say that the word *illā*[559] here means 'and'. This is according to the statement of some grammarians but it is a weak opinion. Sibawayh says *illā* means 'but', in which case the exception clause would be disjunctive. Ibn Jarīr endorses this opinion. He said, "Allah will never break His promise. So the

[559]Usually translated as 'except'.

exception is related to 'a gift without break'. A similar phrase would be, 'You may live in my house for a year except for what you wish,' which means, 'except for what you wish to add to it.'"

Others have said that the exception emphasizes that though people will live in Paradise forever this will entirely depend on the will of Allah. It is not the case that they are no longer under the command of His will. This does not at all contradict the idea of infinite stay in Paradise. Examples of such hypothetical exceptions are many in the Qur'ān, for example, Allah says, "If it were Our will We could take away what We have sent you by inspiration. Then would you find none to plead your affair in that matter as against Us" [17:86]; "But if He willed, He could seal up your heart" [42:24]; "Say: If Allah had so willed I should not have rehearsed it to you, nor would He have made it known to you" [10:16]. What Allah wants to underline is that things are entirely at His will, that what He wills happens and what He does not will does not happen.

Some say that the *mā* (what) in the verse means *man* (who). That is, except for whomever Allah wishes to enter into the Fire because of his sins. Others offer even other opinions.

In any case, the exact meaning of the exception in that verse is from the equivocal verses of the Qur'ān. But the words, "a gift without break" are unequivocal. The following verses are also unequivocal: "Lo! this is in truth Our provision, which will never waste away" [38:43]; "Its food is everlasting, and its shade" [13:35]; and, "Nor will they be expelled from there" [15:48].

That life in Paradise will last forever has been stated in many verses of the Qur'ān. Allah states that the people of Paradise "taste not death therein, except the first death" [44:56]. That exception clause is disjunctive. It is accompanied with the exception in Allah's words, "except what your Lord wills." These two verses are meant to exclude the time that they are not in Paradise from their everlasting life, like excluding the first death from the general mention of death, which death takes place before their everlasting life. Similarly, the above exception, where they are outside of Paradise, takes place before they enter Paradise.

There are also many *aḥādīth* that underscore the perpetuity of life in Paradise. For example, the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "One who enters Paradise will be always happy and never unhappy, will always live and never die;"[560] or, "A voice will call: People of Paradise! You will always be well and never sick, always young

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[560]Muslim, *Al-Jannah*, 2836; Ad-Dārimī, *Ar-Riqāq*, 2822; Aḥmad, 2:370, 407, 416, 462.

and never old, and you will ever live and never die."[561] I have already mentioned the *ḥadīth* which says that Death will be brought and killed between Paradise and Hell, and then the announcement will be, "People of Paradise! You will live for ever and never die. People of Hell! You will live for ever and never die."[562]

Is Hell everlasting and eternal? There are eight different views on the subject. First, once any person enters Hell he will never come out. This is the view of the Mu'tazilah and the Khawārij. Second, people will first suffer the torments of Hell then they will be completely transformed and will begin to enjoy the torments as it will be in accord with their new nature. This is the belief of Ibn 'Arabī At-Ta'ī, the leader of the monists. Third, people will be sent to Hell for a limited period, after which they will be taken out; then another group will be sent in their place. This is the view which the Jews held at the time of the Prophet (peace be on him) and which he denounced. Allah depicts it in these words, "They say: the Fire will not touch us but for a few numbered days. Say: Have you taken a promise from Allah, for He never breaks His promise. Or is it that you say of Allah what you do not know? Nay, those who seek gain in evil, and are girt round by their sins, are companions of the Fire. Therein will they abide (for ever)" [2:80-81].

Fourth, everyone will come out of Hell in the end but Hell will continue to exist though there will be no one there. Fifth, it will perish by itself, for it is a contingent thing and nothing that is contingent abides forever. This is the view of Jahm and his followers. They say the same thing about Paradise, as we have mentioned before. Sixth, in Hell people will cease to move in the end and turn unconscious and lifeless. They will not feel any pain. This is the view of Abū Al-Hudhayl Al-'Allāf, as mentioned earlier. Seventh, Allah will take out of Hell whom He will, as the *aḥādīth* say, then He will keep it for a while and then destroy it because He has fixed a term for it. Eighth, Allah will take out from it whom He will, as the *aḥādīth* state, and leave the infidels there to suffer forever and ever. This is the view of the author. All these views are clearly wrong except the last two, which are held by different groups of the Ahl as-Sunnah.

In support of the first of the two views the following verses have been cited: "He will say: the Fire be your dwelling place. You will dwell therein forever, except as Allah wills, for your Lord is

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[561]Muslim, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2837; At-Tirmidhī, *At-Tafsīr,* 3246; Ad-Dārimī, 2:334; Aḥmad, 2:319, 3:38, 95.

[562]Mentioned earlier; it is authentic.

Full of wisdom and knowledge" [6:138]; "Those who are wretched will be in the Fire: there will be for them therein (nothing but) the heaving of sighs and sobs. They will dwell therein for all the time that the heavens and the earth endure except as your Lord wills; for your Lord is the Accomplisher of what He plans" [11:106-107]. It may be noted that following the exception clauses in these two verses there is no statement comparable to the one that follows the exception clause in verse 11:108 about the people of Paradise, namely "this a gift that will never end." A third verse that supports the non-eternity of Hell is, "They will dwell therein for ages" [78:23].

Among those who say that Hell, as opposed to Paradise, will terminate one day are Companions like 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Hurayrah, Abū Sa'īd, and others.[563] Commenting on these verses in his famous commentary on the Qur'ān, 'Abd Ibn Ḥumayd has mentioned the words of 'Umar: "People may remain in the Fire as many days as the particles in a heap of sand, but then there will be a time when they will come out of it."[564] He mentioned that in his commentary on "They will abide therein for ages" [78:23]. The proponents of this view also point out that Hell manifests Allah's wrath, while Paradise manifests His mercy, and the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "When Allah intended to create the world He wrote in the Book which is with Him above the Throne: "My mercy outdoes My wrath," or, as we have in another version, "overcomes My wrath."[565] This *ḥadīth* has been recorded by Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

They also draw attention to the fact that when Allah refers to the future penalty, He says, "the penalty of a Mighty Day" [6:15] or "of a Grievous Day" [11:26] or "of a Day of Disaster" [22:55]. But when he refers to the future bliss He does not mention even once that it is the bliss of a Day. Furthermore, Allah has said, "With My punishment I visit whom I will; but My mercy extends to all things" [7:156]. Addressing Allah, the angels said, "Our Lord! Your reach is over all things, in mercy and knowledge" [40:7]. This means that His mercy will also extend to the people in Hell, for if they remained there forever they would not get His mercy. According to a *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the Day of Recompense will be equal to fifty thousand

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[563]Again, according to Al-Albānī none of these reports are authentic. Al-Arnawūṭ and At-Turkī point out that such reports clearly contradict the proofs from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. They discuss each report in detail.
[564]This narration is weak.
[565]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

years.[566] People will undergo punishment for different periods depending upon the nature of their crimes. However, it does not behoove the One Who is Most Just and Most Merciful to create people and condemn them to eternal suffering without end. On the other hand, it does behoove Him to create people and bestow upon them everlasting happiness. Suffering is not an end in itself: happiness is. The texts that say that people will suffer forever, that they will have no relief at all, and that they will not ever be taken out of Hell, are true and indisputable, but they only mean that people will suffer in the House of Suffering so long as it lasts. Those who believe in one God will be taken out in the course of its life, and others when it expires. To take one out of a prison is one thing, and to demolish the prison and set people free is another.

Those who believe that the Fire will blaze forever and will never stop quote the following verses: "Their penalty will be one that endures" [5:37]; "It will not be lightened for them, and in despair will they be there overwhelmed" [43:75]; "No increase will We grant you except in punishment" [78:30]; "They will abide therein forever" [98:8]; "Nor will they be expelled from there" [15:48]; "Nor will there be a way for them out of Fire" [2:167]; "They will not enter the Garden until a camel can pass through the eye of a needle" [7:40]; "No term will be determined for them, so they should die, nor its penalty be lightened for them" [35:36]; and, "Indeed its torture will abide" [35:65]. They also point out that a number of *aḥādīth* tell us that those who believe that there is no god except Allah will be taken out of Fire; this is also the meaning of the *ḥadīth* on intercession. That ruling is especially for them. Now the question is, if the infidels are also to be taken out of the Fire, there will be no difference between them and the Believers in one God, and the relief from the Fire will not be linked with faith. Finally, Paradise or Hell will not abide of themselves forever, they will abide because Allah will make them everlasting.

The author has said, "He has created people for each." This is referred to in the verse, "Many are the jinns and men We have made for Hell" [7:179]. 'Ā'ishah said that once when the Prophet (peace be on him) was called to the funeral of a child from the Anṣār, she said, "Messenger of Allah, how blessed is this bird of Paradise! He neither did any evil, nor will he see it." the Prophet said, "'Ā'ishah, it might be different. Allah created some people for Paradise, and He created them for it even before they were born. Likewise, He created

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[566]Muslim, *Az-Zakāh*, 987; Abū Dāwūd, 1658; An-Nasā'ī, 5:12-14; Aḥmad, 2:262, 383, 490.

some people for Hell, and He created them for it even before they were born."[567] This *ḥadīth* has been recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Al-Nasā'ī. Allah has said, "Verily We created man from a drop of mingled sperm in order to try him. So We gave him (the gift) of hearing and sight. We showed him the way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)" [76:2-3]. The word "way" in the verse means guidance, complete and comprehensive, not simply natural guidance which is referred to in the verse, "He Who gave to each being its form and then guided it..." [20:50].

There are two kinds of beings in the world, those that are governed by natural laws and those that act of their own will. The former Allah guides through natural inspiration, and the latter He guides by revealing what is good or evil for them. The latter He has further divided into three kinds. First are those that always do good and never do evil; they are the angels. The second are those that always do evil and never do good; they are the devils. The third are those who may do both good and evil; they are the human beings. He has also divided human beings into three categories. First are those who subject their desires and passions to the behest of their faith, reason and knowledge, and elevate themselves to the level of the angels. The people of the second category act in the opposite manner and degrade themselves to the level of the devils. In the third category we have people whose animal desires often prevail over their reason; they descend to the level of beasts. In short, Allah is the creator of both forms of beings, ideal as well as real. Just as nothing exists except what He creates, similarly no one is on the right path except one whom He guides. The whole of existence demonstrates His complete power, absolute oneness and perfect lordship.

The author has said, "Those whom He allotted for Paradise, He allotted just as a favor, and those whom He allotted for Hell He did so because His justice demanded it." Let us bear in mind that Allah does not withhold a reward without withholding its cause, which is good action. He has said, "Whoever works deeds of righteousness and has faith, will have no fear of harm, nor of any curtailment (of what is his due)" [20:112]. Similarly, He does not punish anyone unless there is a cause for it. He has said, "Whatever misfortune happens to you is because of the things your hands have wrought; and for many (of you) He grants forgiveness" [42:30]. He is the One Who gives and the One Who withholds. None can give what

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[567]Muslim, *Al-Qadr*, 2662; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4713; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 82; An-Nasā'ī, 4:57; Aḥmad, 6:41, 208; Ibn Ḥibban, 138.

He withholds or withhold what He gives. When He guides someone to faith and inspires him with good deeds He does not withhold his rewards. He will bestow upon him such favors and rewards as no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no mind has ever imagined. On the other hand, when He does not bestow upon someone His blessings that is because his cause is not forthcoming, namely, righteous action.

To be sure, He guides whom He will and leaves astray whom He will. This is, however, according to His wisdom and demand of justice. When the cause is present He does not stop its effect from taking place; He only stops the effect when the cause is insufficient, either because there is something wrong in one's deeds or because there are obstacles there. He deprives a person of His favor or inflicts upon him a penalty because he does not have faith or is lacking in good deeds. He did not inspire that person with faith or good deeds because He wants to try him or because that is the demand of His wisdom and justice; in both cases He deserves our praise. Every reward is a favor from Him and every punishment is an act of justice. He is Wise and places things in their proper places, as He has said, "When there comes to them a sign (from Allah) they say: 'We will not believe until we receive one exactly like those received by Allah's messengers.' Allah knows best whom to charge with His message" [6:124]; "Thus did We try some of them by comparison with others that they should say: 'Is it these then that Allah has favored from among us?' Does not Allah know best those who are grateful?" [6:53]. We will return to this point later, God willing.

(92) The power needed to perform a duty is a gift from Allah, not an attribute possessed by man, and exists only with the action. However, power in the sense of health, potential, ability and fitness of the organs is prior to action and is the basis of obligation. "Allah does not place on any person a burden greater than he can bear" [2:286].

The words ability (*istiṭā'ah*), might (*ṭāqah*), power (*qudrah*) and capability (*wus'*) are almost synonymous. That power is of two kinds,[568] as the author has stated, is the view of the Ahl as-Sunnah in general. That is the balanced view. For the Qadarīyyah and the

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[568]For this point see also Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 8:129-131, 371-376, 479-480 and *Dar' Ta'āruḍ al-'Aql wa an-Naql*, 1:60-63.

Mu'tazilah, however, power must always exist prior to action. In order to counter them, a group of the Ahl as-Sunnah came out with the view that power always co-exists with action. However, the majority of the Ahl as-Sunnah stick to the belief that power is of two kinds. One, which is the basis of obligation and the condition for Allah's command, exists prior to action and does not necessarily co-exist with it. The other, with which the action is actually performed, co-exists with the action; there is no action without power.

Power in the sense of health, potential, ability and fitness of organs, which exists prior to action has been referred to in various verses of the Qur'ān, for example, "Pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) to the House is a duty men owe to Allah – those who can afford the journey thereto" [3:97]. This clearly shows that Allah enjoins *ḥajj* on those who are able to perform it. But if none can afford *ḥajj* except those who actually make it, it will be enjoined only on those who make it. This means that Allah would punish no one for not making *ḥajj*, which goes against the established tenets of Islam.

Take another verse, "Fear Allah and obey Him as much as you can" [64:16]. This also emphasizes that Allah enjoins fear and obedience according to one's ability. But, if one who does not obey Allah could not obey Him, it would mean that Allah does not enjoin obedience except on one who actually obeys Him. It also follows that he will not punish those who do not fear and obey Him, which is obviously false.

Here is a third verse: "One who is unable to do it should feed sixty indigents" [58:4]. This means those who have the means and tools to perform the act. In a fourth verse, Allah quotes the hypocrites, "If only we could, we would certainly have come out with you" [9:42]. Allah declares their statement to be a lie.

The ability referred to in all these verses is ability of means, which is prior to action. The last verse quotes the words of the hypocrites, concerning which Allah says, "They only ruin themselves; for Allah knows that they are certainly lying." Obviously, if by inability they had meant their failure to go out, Allah would not have called them liars when they did not go out. But since He has charged them with lying, it means that by their inability they meant either their illness or lack of provision for the campaign. And had they been really sick or lacking the means, Allah would have excused them, as He says, "There is no blame on those who are infirm, or ill or who find no resources to spend... The ground (of complaint) is against such as claim exemption while they are rich" [9:91-93]. The same is the meaning of ability in the verse, "If anyone of you have not the ability (*istiṭā'ah*) wherewith to wed free (and) believing women they may wed believing girls from

among those whom your right hands possess" [4:25]; and in the *ḥadīth* when the Prophet (peace be upon him) told 'Imrān Ibn Ḥussayn, "Pray standing, but if you cannot, then sitting, and if you cannot do even that, then lying on the side."[569]

Ability in the sense of actually performing an action has been referred to in many verses, for example, "They could not hear and could not see" [11:20]. Obviously, what is negated here are the acts of hearing and seeing, not the means to hear and see, which they had. We will discuss this point in detail later when we comment on the author's words, "They do not have power to do things except those which He has commanded them." Another verse is that in which Moses is told by his companion, "Did I not tell you that you cannot have patience with me" [18:75]. Here, too, what is meant is patience itself and not the means of patience, which were not lacking. The reproof that Moses' friend administered to him was on his failure to observe patience, not for his lack of means for patience. We do not blame a person for not having means; we blame him for not using them even though he has them, or for not using his means for what they have been commanded to be used for, or for using them against what they should be used for.

Those who believe that power exists only at the time of action believe that power cannot be employed for doing a thing as well as its opposite. Power is for doing a particular action and for doing that only; for it exists with that action and not without it.

The free-willers (Qadarīyyah), on the other hand, base their view upon the wrong proposition that Allah gives equal powers to every person, Believer and non-believer, righteous and wicked. They deny that Allah helps the Believer in his faith and obedience, and say that if he chooses faith he does it all by himself; on the other hand, if the non-believer denies faith he does that all by himself. It is just like a father who gives each of his sons a sword, but one uses it to fight for the cause of Allah and another to rob people.

The scholars of the Ahl as-Sunnah, who believe in *qadr*, are agreed that this view is wrong. They believe that Allah bestows upon His faithful servants favors that He does not bestow upon the unfaithful. He helps the faithful carry out His commands, but not the unfaithful. He has said, "But Allah has endeared the faith to you, and has made it beautiful in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you unbelief, wickedness and rebellion. Such indeed are those who are on the right track" [49:7]. The free-willers say that this endearing

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[569] Al-Bukhārī, 1117; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 952; At-Tirmidhī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 372; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1223; Aḥmad 4:426.

of faith and making it beautiful is not only for the faithful but for everyone, for it is simple to explain the faith and establish it with arguments. But the verse demands that it should be limited to the faithful, for it concludes with the words, "Such indeed are those who are on the right track." Obviously, the non-believers are not on the right track. Elsewhere, Allah has said, "Those whom Allah (in His plan) wills to guide, He opens their breast to Islam; and those whom He wills to leave astray He makes their breast closed and constricted, as if they had to climb up to the skies. Thus does Allah (heap) the penalty on those who refuse to believe" [6:125]. There are many verses of this nature in the Qur'ān that declare that Allah guides some and leaves others to stray, for example, "He whom Allah guides is rightly guided, but he whom He leaves to stray, you will not find for him any guardian to lead him to the right way" [18:17]. This point[570] will be elaborated upon later, God willing.

Some people say that Allah prefers one over another arbitrarily without any reason. If preference means something more than simply selecting someone, that is the reason for preference; but if it does not mean that, and the state of the preferrer before and after the selection is the same without any change, and if selection can equally occur in either state, that will flagrantly contradict all laws of reason. Since the free-willers build on the proposition that the obedient and the disobedient receive equal power and help from Allah, they have to deny that the former might have some special power to do Allah's will, for the power which is for doing Allah's will is not available to one who does not do His will; only the doer will have it, and, obviously, it will come from Allah. Again, since they say that power has to exist prior to action, they deny that it exists with action, for power, they say, means the ability to do and not do, and when one does an action one cannot not do it. This leads them to say that there is no power except what is prior to the action. But this is wrong, for a thing cannot exist if some of the conditions for its existence are lacking. In order for a thing to exist it is necessary that all the conditions for its existence must be there. This means that the view opposite to theirs is true, namely that for an act to take place there must be some power there that co-exists with it.

However, those who believe in the necessity of a co-existing power are divided into two groups. One group says that power cannot exist except with the action. They think that there is only one kind of power there, and that it cannot be employed both for doing

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[570]For discussion on the point see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Dar' Ta'āruḍ al-'Aql wa an-Naql*, 1:26-31.

something and for not doing it. For some of this group, however, there is a different reason. They think that power is an incident which cannot exist for two instants; hence it must exist with the action.

The truth is that power is of two kinds, as we have said before. One power forms the grounds for action and constitutes the ability to do it and not do it. This power is the basis for the obligations of the Shari'ah. It precedes action and continues throughout the action, either by itself, as is asserted by those who uphold the persistence of an incident to the next instant, or through the recurrence of its replicas. This power may be employed both for doing something and for not doing it, and forms the basis of Allah's obligation, for He never obliges anyone to do something over which he has no power or is not competent to do.

The ability that is required by the Shari'ah is different and more specific than the ability that, without its presence, an action cannot be performed. The ability that the Shari'ah perceives is one where an action does not have to be performed if it is missing, even though it is not impossible to be performed. Allah makes things easy on His servants. He desires ease for them and does not want hardship for them. No hardship has been put upon you from the religion. An ill person can perform the prayer standing although that will hurt him more and delay his recovery. From the Shari'ah point of view, he is considered a person who does not have the ability to pray standing due to the harm that it will cause him. Although he can be called "capable", the Lawgiver, from the view of legal capacity, has not looked at the possiblity of an action but looks at its consequences. If an action is actually possible but leads to greater harm, from the Shari'ah perspective it is not a "possible action". An example is a person having the physical ability to perform the pilgrimage but in doing so he would do harm to his body and/or wealth, or one who prays standing, making his illness worse, or if one fasts two months and is cut off from his livelihood. If the Lawgiver takes into consideration whether a specific act leads to greater harm, how can He hold one responsible for acts beyond one's capability?

Although this power continues to exist until the action is performed, it is not sufficient to bring about the action. Had it been sufficient, one who did not do the action would be on the same level with one who did it. It is, therefore, necessary that another force concomitant with the action exist. For example, one should be made to will the action, without which a voluntary action is inconceivable. A firm will is part of the power that co-exists with the action, and not of the power which precedes it, and is grounds for obligation. Obviously, will is not part of the latter, for surely Allah does

command one who does not will the act. But He does not command one who cannot do it even if he wills to do so. We do ask our servants to do something which they did not intend to do, but we do not ask them to do what they cannot do. When there is a firm will along with sufficient power, the action must necessarily follow.

The issue of obligation for what one cannot do may be viewed in the light of what has been said here. Those who believe that power does not exist except at the time of action, say that every one of the non-believers and the disobedient is asked to do what he cannot do. But what one cannot do may mean what is completely beyond one's power. It is obvious that Allah does not oblige anyone to do what is completely beyond his power. However, what one cannot do may also mean what one is unable to do because he is engaged in doing something other than or opposite to what he is asked to do. It is the acts that one cannot do in this second sense that are commanded by Islamic law. And it is also the acts of this category that we ask each other to do. We do differentiate between the two meanings of "what one cannot do". Certainly we do not ask a blind man to put diacritical marks on a passage of the Qur'ān, but we do ask one who is sitting to stand up. This is something quite plain.

(93) Human actions are created by Allah, although they are acquired by man.

There are different opinions about our voluntary actions. The determinists (Jahmīyyah), led by Al-Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān As-Samarqandī, say that human actions are completely determined by Allah and are involuntary and unavoidable, just like the movement of a shivering person, the beating of a pulse, or the swaying of trees in the wind. Calling them human acts is using a metaphor; it is only to attribute them to their locus, not to their doer.

The Mu'tazilah hold the diametrically opposite view. They say that voluntary actions, no matter what living being they proceed from, are not at all created by Allah. On this point the Mu'tazilis are all agreed. They only differ on the question of whether Allah can have any control over human actions.

The People of Truth say that human actions are human actions. That it is why men are called obedient or sinful. On the other hand, they are created by Allah, the only Creator Who creates everything by Himself without the participation of anyone else. The determinists exaggerate fore-ordainment and negate human contribution just as the anthropomorphists exceed the limit in affirming divine attributes. The free-willers, on the opposite side, negate fore-ordainment and extol man as a creator of his actions in

place of Allah. This is the reason they are the Magians of this *ummah*. But they are worse than the Magians. The Magians posit only two creators, but they posit innumerable creators.

Allah has guided the Ahl as-Sunnah to the truth amid conflicting views. He alone guides whomever He wills to the right path. All the texts which the determinists quote prove only that Allah is the Creator of all things, that He has power over all, that human actions are part of His creation, that what He wills happens, and what He does not will does not happen. But they do not prove that men do not perform their actions in reality, or choose and will them, or that their voluntary actions are like the shivering of a body, the blowing of a wind or the swaying of a tree. On the other hand, the texts that the free-willers cite only prove that men really do their acts, choose and will them, and that to attribute actions to them is not metaphorical; but they do not prove that human actions are not determined by Allah, or that they happen without His will and power.

If we combine what is true in one view with what is true in the other, we get at the correct view, which the Qur'ān and all the revealed books teach, namely that Allah's will and power encompass all that is in the world, things as well as actions, and that human beings are nevertheless the real doers of their actions, and therefore deserve praise or blame for those acts.

This is the truth. There is no contradiction between one text and the other; each one supports the other. The limitations of this book do not allow me to examine at length the arguments which each group has advanced. I will only mention a few of them and show that they do not prove that what the opposite group asserts is wrong.

The determinists, for example, cite the verse, "When you threw (a handful of dust) you did not throw, but Allah threw it" [8:17], and say that Allah denies that the throwing was the Prophet's act and infer that it was He Who did it. This, they claim, proves that man does nothing. As for recompense, it is not the consequence, they say, of human actions, and quote in support the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "None of you will go to Paradise on account of his deeds." When someone asked, "Not even you, Messenger of Allah?" he replied, "Not even I, except that Allah cover me with His mercy."[571]

The free-willers, on the other hand, cite the verse, "So blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators" [23:14]. And with regard to

[571] Aḥmad, 2:256. See also Al-Bukhārī, 5673, 6363, 6464; Muslim, 2816, 2817, 2818; Aḥmad, 2:235, 256, 264, 326, 344.

recompense, they claim that it is the consequence of human actions and a reward, as Allah has said, "a reward for their deeds" [32:17, 46:14, 56:24] and "Behold the Garden before you! You have been made its inheritors, for your (good) deeds" [43:72].

In fact, the verse which the determinists have cited goes against them. Allah attributes the throwing to the Prophet (peace be on him) when He says, "When you threw..." This means that what He affirms in these words should be different from what He denies later, and this is not difficult to understand. Throwing is an act which has a beginning and an end. The beginning is slinging and the end is hitting; both are part of throwing. What the verse means to say is, and Allah knows better, that the Prophet (peace be on him) did not hit when he slung, it was Allah Who hit. If the determinists do not accept this explanation they should be prepared to extend their explanation to every other thing. They should say, for example, that when a person prays or fasts, it is not he but Allah Who prays and fasts, or when he fornicates or steals it is not he who fornicates or steals (but it was Allah Who did so). This is obviously false.

On the issue of recompense, the determinists and the free-willers are equally wrong – and Allah has guided the Ahl as-Sunnah and to Allah is the praise. They both fail to understand the preposition bi in the two statements, "No one will go to Paradise bi *'amalihi* (on account of his deeds)," and "This is the recompense *bi ma kanū ya'malūn* (for what they have been doing)." the *bi* used in negation is different from the *bi* used in an affirmation. In the former, *bi* is the *bi* of *'iwaḍ* (price). What the *ḥadīth* denies is that human deeds are a price for entry into Paradise, as the Mu'tazilah think; for them one has the right to enter Paradise when one has paid the price in the form of deeds. But this is not true; entry into Paradise is a blessing from Allah and a favor. In the latter statement, on the other hand, *bi* is the *bi* of *sabab* (cause). That is, people will enter Paradise because they have been doing good deeds. And since Allah is the Creator of all reasons and causes, as well as their consequences or effects, entry into Paradise will also be only a favor from Allah and His blessing.[572]

As for the argument of the Mu'tazilah from the verse, "Blessed be Allah, the Best of the creators (*khaliqīn*)", *khāliq* here means 'designer' (*muṣawwir*) and 'planner' (*muqaddir*). *Khālq* often

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[572]See the discussion of this point in Ibn Taymīyyah, *Jami' ar-Rasā'il* (ed. Dr. M. Rashad Salim; Jiddah: Dār Al-Madanī, 2nd ed., 1405/1984), vol. I, pp. 146-152; Ibn Al-Qayyīm, Hadī al-Arwah, p. 61.

means to plan and ordain, and this is what is meant in this verse, for Allah has said elsewhere in the Qur'ān, "Allah is the Creator (Khāliq) of all things" [13:18, 39:62]. He is the Creator of every created thing in the world, which includes human actions. However, the Mu'tazilah wrongly try to extend this verse to Allah's speech. They say that "all things" should also include Allah's speech, and, therefore, the Qur'ān should be believed to be created. It is strange that they consider Allah's speech, which is His attribute and which, therefore, is not a created thing, to be included in the phrase "all things", while they exclude human actions from it. Obviously, only those things should be included in it which are created, not the Essence of Allah or His attributes. The words, "*wa Allah khalaqakum wa mā ta'malūn* (Allah has created you and *mā ta'malūn*)" [37:96], as part of Allah's speech are certainly not created. But we do not understand the phrase *mā ta'malūn* to mean *'your action' or *'your carving' (the idols). To be sure, this interpretation does not fit in the context, for Abraham is objecting to the worship of the idols which his people have carved (not to their act of carving). However, the verse does say that the idols are Allah's creation. And since they are idols just because they have been carved by people, it means that the product of human action is a creation of Allah. But were the act of carving not Allah's creation, the objects carved would not have been Allah's creation; they would have been merely wood or stone, and nothing else.

Abū Al-Ḥussayn Al-Baṣrī, the leader of the later Mu'tazilah, has said that the fact that man produces (*yuhdith*) his action is a piece of necessary knowledge. On the other hand, Ar-Rāzī has claimed that we know *a priori* that in order for a possible contingent being to exist it needs one who wills to bring it into existence, and it will not exist if He does not will its existence. Both these propositions are correct, and the claim which some people have made that they contradict each other is wrong. Both parties are correct in what they assert, but they are wrong in what they deny, for there is no contradiction between saying that man produces his actions and saying that it is produced just because Allah wills it. Allah has said, "By the soul and what He molded, and then inspired it with (the knowledge of) its sins and its piety" [91:7-8]. This is an affirmation of fore-ordainment; but on the other hand, the fact that sin and piety are attributed to the soul also affirms that they are human acts, and that it is man who is the sinner and who is pious. The following verse, "Successful is the one who keeps it pure and ruined is the one who corrupts it" [91:9-10], further affirms human action. We can cite many more verses of this nature.

Another misconception that arises from those groups that have been completely splintered is whether Allah should chastise people for their sins which He has created in them. Will it be justice on His part to punish for what He himself has created and done in them? This question has been asked again and again by men throughout the world, and people have given different answers according to their knowledge. Different extremes have thereby developed. Some have placed human actions outside the orbit of divine power; some have denied that Allah's actions have purpose and wisdom and that they are subject to our judgments, and have thus closed all the doors to this question; some have preferred the idea of acquisition (*kasb*), which is hardly intelligible, and have tried to justify, on its basis, reward and punishment; some have put forth the concept of double causes and twin actors; and some have asserted determinism and have not shied away from saying that Allah punishes people for what is not their doing. That question is what led to all of these divisions and differences.

The correct answer is that when one commits a sin, even though Allah creates it, it is a punishment for another sin which one committed earlier. One sin leads to another sin, the succeeding one is punishment for the preceding one, just as one disease leads to another disease.

One might ask, what about the first sin which led to subsequent sins? What has led to it? the answer is that it is punishment for not doing what one has been created for and what is ingrained in man. Allah has created man to worship and serve Him alone without associating anyone with Him, and He has endowed man with love and devotion to Him. He has said, "So set your face steadily and truly to the Faith that Allah has prescribed, (and) upon which He has formed mankind" [30:30]. So when a man does not do what he was created for and does not devote himself to Allah, and love Him and serve Him, he is punished for the omission in that Satan makes the *shirk* and sin that he indulges in alluring and pleasing to him. He finds an empty heart which can welcome good as well as evil. If it had good in it, he would not have filled it with evil. Allah has said, "Thus (did We command) so that We might turn away from him evil and shameful deeds, for he (Joseph) was one of Our sincere and purified (*mukhlaṣ*) servants" [12:24]. Allah has quoted Iblīs as saying, "Then by Your power, I will put them all in the wrong, except your servants among them, sincere and purified (by your grace)" [38:82-83], and Allah responded, "This is indeed a way that leads straight to Me, for over My servants no authority will you have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow you" [15:41-42]. Ikhlāṣ is to purify the heart from love and devotion to all

else other than Allah and to devote oneself to Him and serve Him sincerely. When this happens Satan cannot lure man; but when it does not happen, he lures man. Thus to put him in this condition of committing a sin is a kind of punishment for the absence of *ikhlāṣ*, and this is fair and just.

One may ask about the absence of *ikhlāṣ*, as to who has created it in man? the answer is that the question is invalid, for non-existence, as the term says, is not an object to be created or produced. The absence of an action is not something positive that requires an actor for it to happen. It is evil pure and simple, and no evil comes from Allah, as the Prophet (peace be on him) said in opening his prayer, "Lord! Here I am. Glory to you. All good is in Your hands, and evil does not come from You."[573] These words also form part of the prayer he will address to Allah when interceding on behalf of the sinners on the Day of Judgment.

Allah has made it clear that He lets Satan have control only over those people who take him as their friend and supporter, and associate him with Allah. So when they follow him and associate him with Allah he is given control over them by way of punishment. Their association of Satan with Allah and their devotion to him besides Allah is, therefore, a punishment for them for their lack of *ikhlāṣ* to Allah. Hence, when one is inspired with the right and the good, it is the result of one's *ikhlāṣ*; and when one is inspired with evil and sin it is the result of the absence of *ikhlāṣ*.

One may ask: if the absence of *ikhlāṣ* is something existing, the objection remains; but if it is something negative, or non-existing then would it be fair for Allah to punish anybody for something non-existing? We point out that the absence of *ikhlāṣ* does not mean that one has restrained the soul from indulging in desires. Were it so, it would be taken as something existing. But what we have here is the absence of all the means to goodness. This non-existence is simply the deprivation of everything useful to the soul, and the punishment of this deprivation is indulgence in evil, which is different from the punishment that follows when one denies a prophet after his veracity has been established.

In fact, Allah's punishment is of two kinds. One is that He lets a man do wrong and commit sin. This is a chastisement for his lack of *ikhlāṣ*, indifference and non-submission, a chastisement which is often not felt and does not hurt as one continues to indulge in one's desires, but nonetheless it is a great punishment. The second punishment, that which follows the commission of sin is painful.

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[573]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

Allah has referred to the first punishment in these words, "When they forgot the warning they had received, We opened to them the gates of all (good) things" [7:44]; and He has referred to the second in the following words, "Until, in the midst of their enjoyment of our gifts, on a sudden, We called them to account, when lo! they were plunged in despair" [6:44].

One may ask: if it is possible for them to have turned to Allah in repentance and to have submitted to Him without Him creating contrition in their heart and acquiescence and submission to Him, would it have sufficed if He had only put in their hearts the thought of *ikhlāṣ*? The answer is in the negative, for this depends entirely on Allah's favor and grace. All good is in His hands; no one can do anything good except what He bestows. Similarly, no one can refrain from any evil except what He saves one from.

One may ask again: if it is not created in people's hearts, and they are not inspired to it, and on the other hand they cannot do it by themselves, the question still remains: if Allah deprives them of it, will He not be being unfair to them? Will you then fall back on the answer that there is nothing wrong in appropriating one's property as one likes, and Allah will not be asked for what He does? We say that Allah does not do anything wrong if He withholds His grace. One is wrong when one does not render what is due to someone else. Injustice in this sense, Allah has forbidden for Himself, and has prescribed for Himself just the opposite. He withholds from someone what is not his due, which is simply His own favor and grace; hence, He will not be doing anything wrong. Injustice is to withhold what is someone's due. To withhold a favor, on the other hand, is simply fair. Allah is fair when He withholds His favor, and beneficent when He bestows it.

One may still ask: when Allah gives something and inspires to some good, it is only a favor and grace from Him; why should He then not make one do good and prevail over him, just as He has said that His mercy prevails over His wrath? We first point out that what we wanted to demonstrate was that if Allah punished somebody from whom He had withheld the inspiration to do good, He did not do injustice to him, nor was it injustice if He withheld the inspiration. The question raised now is different. It concerns divine wisdom in making His justice prevail over His grace. In fact, it is a question of why He does not bless and favor all his servants equally, or why He favors one and does not favor another. Allah has answered this question when He says, "This is the grace of Allah, which He bestows on whom He pleases, and Allah is the Lord of grace abounding" [57:21]. Referring to the blessings that He has bestowed on the *ummah* of Muḥammad, He says, "Let the

people of the Book know that they have no power whatsoever over the grace of Allah, (and) that His grace is entirely in His hands to bestow on whomsoever He wills, for Allah is the Lord of grace abounding" [57:29-30].

When the Jews and Christians questioned the Prophet (peace be on him) about why Allah gave his *ummah* two rewards and gave them only one reward, he told them Allah's answer in these words: "Did I withhold from you your due and do you injustice?" They replied, "No." Thereupon Allah said, "This is My favor which I bestow upon those whom I will."[574] It is not wise that He should foretell every one of His decisions as to whom He will favor and whom not. When He revealed to a servant of His a part of His wisdom in dealing with his people, in prescribing for them rules, and in requiting them reward or punishment, and in favoring one and not favoring another, he thought it over and exclaimed that what he knew was very, very small in comparison to what he did not know.

While not knowing the wisdom of Allah about the recipient of His guidance, the polytheists of Makkah asked, "Is it these then that Allah has favored from among us?" Allah retorted, "Does Allah not know best those who are grateful?" [7:53]. If you ponder this answer you will realize that Allah knows best the soil wherein He should plant the tree of his favor which will bear the fruit of gratefulness, just as He knows the soil wherein He should not plant the tree because it is not fruit-bearing; and had He tried that, His efforts would have gone to waste, which would be against His wisdom. That is why He has said, "Allah knows best whom to charge with His mission" [6:124].

One may say that if I deny any creation on the part of man I, in fact, am denying that man is the doer of his actions. This is not true. Man really does his actions and he really has the power to do it. Allah has said, "Whatever good you do Allah knows it" [2:197]; and, "Do grieve no longer over what they have been doing" [11:36]. Many more verses of this kind can be quoted.

Now, when it is established that man is the doer of his actions, know that his actions are of two kinds. One proceeds from him without his power and his will coming into play. They are attributed to him but they are not his acts; an example is the movement of a person shivering with cold. The second kind of acts is those which proceed from man following the use of his power and will. They are

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[574] Al-Bukhārī, 557, 2268, 2269, 3459, 5021, 7467, 7533; At-Tirmidhī, 2871; Aḥmad, 2:6, 111, 121, 129; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 1820.

attributed to him, and they are his acts and his acquisition (*kasb*). They are his voluntary acts,, but it is Allah Who has made man the actor and the willer, and it is absolutely His making, without the participation of anyone else. This is why the Elders have denounced determinism (*jabr*). Determinism denotes that the agent does not have power, that he is forced to do the act. In our language we say that the father has power to force (*ijbar*) his young daughter to marry, but he cannot force (*ijbar*) an adult or widowed daughter and give her in marriage against her will.

Coercion (*ijbar*) in this sense is not attributed to Allah, for He is the Creator of human will and what it wills; He causes man to choose freely as against the other beings. That is why the Islamic texts use the word *jabal* rather than *jabr*. The Prophet (peace be on him) said to Ashajj 'Abdul-Qays, "You have two qualities which Allah likes very much: forbearance and patience." Ashajj asked, "Have I acquired them or have I been endowed with them (*jubiltu 'alayhimā*)?" the Prophet said, "You have been endowed with them." Ashajj said, "Praise and thanks to Allah, Who has endowed me with qualities which He and His Prophet love."[575] Allah punishes man for his voluntary acts, and the distinction between punishment for voluntary acts and non-voluntary acts is inherent in human nature and part of natural reason.

Lastly, one might say that to create an act and then to punish for it is injustice. I will say that it is just like swallowing poison and then producing death as a result, which is obviously not unjust. As the poison is the cause of death, sin is the cause of punishment. So if there is no injustice in the former, there is no injustice in the latter.

To sum up: Human actions are really done by people, but they are created by Allah. Human acts are objects of His creation (*makhlūq*), as well as objects of His action (*maf'ūl*), though not His action (*fi'l*). One must distinguish between action (*fi'l*) and an object of action (*maf'ūl*), creation (*khālq*) and an object of creation (*makhlūq*). This is what the author had in mind when he said, "Human actions are Allah's creation (*khālq*), and human acquisition." He says "human actions" and "human acquisition (*kasb*)" and, on the other hand, "Allah's creation", for *kasb* refers to those actions whose good or bad consequences are suffered by the doers. Allah has said, "It (the soul) gets every good that it earns (*kasabat*), and it suffers every ill that it earns (*iktasabat*) " [2:286].

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[575]Abū Dāwūd, 5255; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 5313. See also Muslim, 17, 25, 18; At-Tirmidhī, 2011; Aḥmad, 3:23.

(94) Allah does not impose actions upon human beings except what they can do, and they are only able to do what He has imposed upon them. This is the meaning of the Prophet's words, "There is no power and no strength save in Allah." We believe that no one can do anything or move anything, or abstain from any sin except with the help of Allah, nor can anyone obey His command and persevere in obedience except by His grace. Everything happens according to His will, knowledge, decree and planning. His will rules over all wills and His decree prevails over all planning. He does what He pleases and He never commits injustice. "He is not to be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs)" [21:23].

The statement, "Allah does not impose actions upon human beings except what they can do," is based upon the Qur'ānic verses, "Allah does not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear" [2:286], and "No burden do We place on any soul but what it can bear" [6:152, 7:42, 23:62].

However, Abū Al-Ḥassan Al-Ash'arī tries to justify, on rational grounds, obligations that are beyond one's power.[576] His followers are not sure if there is any text to support his view. Some who think that there is support, cite the case of Abū Lahab. He was called upon, they say, to believe, but Allah said that he would not believe and "will be burned soon in a Fire of blazing flame" [111:3]. This means that he was asked to believe what he would not believe. This is asking a person to do two contradictory things simultaneously, which is impossible. However, this contention is not correct. It is not true that Abū Lahab was asked to believe what he would not believe. He had the power to believe, and was not incapable of believing. He was, therefore, charged only with what he had power over, power in the sense we have explained earlier.

There is also no support for this view in the words Allah addressed to the angels: "Tell Me the names of these, if you are correct" [2:31], while they did not have such knowledge, or in the words that will be addressed to the sculptors on the Day of

[576]See Abū Al-Ḥassan Al-Ash'arī, *Kitāb al-Lumā* (ed. and trans. by Richard J. McCarthy, S.J.; Beirut: Al-Maṭba'ah Al-Kathulikīyyah, 1953), p. 68. See also Ibn Taymīyyah, *Dar' Ta'āruḍ al-'Aql wa an-Naql*, 1:60-65; Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 3:318-326.

Judgment, "Put life into the things you have carved,"[577] and other, similar *aḥādīth*. Actually, the words addressed to the angels or to the sculptors do not command anything for which they will be rewarded or punished; it is only a way to state that they are not able to do those things.

Similarly, the supplication of the Believers, "Our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear" [2:286], does not imply that Allah may charge them with such a duty, for to charge one with what he cannot do is not to charge him with a duty. It would be like asking him to move a mountain, which would surely prove fatal. Ibn Al-Anbarī said that what the verse means is that Allah should not charge them with something which is difficult for them to do, even though they could do it if they greatly exerted themselves and bore all troubles. Allah has addressed the Arabs in their own language and in their own style. When they said to a person they hated that they could not see him, they simply meant that it was difficult for them to look at him, even though they could physically see him. It is not wise that Allah should command someone to remove a mountain and say that one will be rewarded if he does and punished if he does not. This is made clear by Allah himself when He says, "He does not put on any soul a burden greater than it can bear" [2:286].

Some people say that it is justified to charge one with what is usually impossible, as against what is in itself impossible. The latter is inconceivable and hence cannot be commanded; on the other hand, the former is conceivable. A third group of people say that what cannot be done cannot be a duty except what cannot be done just because one is busy with something else. These people in essence agree with the Elders and the leading scholars. They use, however, innovative language when they say "except what cannot be done because one is busy with something else," for it boils down to saying that one cannot do what one does not do. They resort to such language because of their assumption that power (*ṭāqah*), whether you call it ability (*istiṭā'ah*) or capability (*qudrah*), exists only with the action. This leads them to say that what one does not do, one cannot do, and this goes against the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the consensus of the Elders, as well as against common sense, as we have said previously in the discussion on power (*istiṭā'ah*).

The power which co-exists with action is not a pre-condition for obligation, even though the intention for the action is there. The exponents of this view argue from the verse, "They lost the power

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[577]Part of a*ḥadīth*, Al-Bukhārī, 5951, 7558; Muslim, 2108; An-Nasā'ī, 8:215.

to hear" [11:20], and "Verily, you (Moses) will not be able to have patience with me" [18:67, 72, 75]. But what they call power (*istiṭā'ah*) and which co-exists with action is not intended at all here. Allah has condemned them for losing the power to hear. If the power referred to here meant the power that exists with action, no human being would be able to hear before he actually hears. Nor would there be any sense in marking out some people for condemnation. The people who have been condemned have been condemned because they disliked the truth or they found it difficult to practice, or they hated the people who preached it, or they did not want to give up their lusts.

Moses, on the other hand, did not have patience with his companion because the latter, in his view, was violating the Law; he did not have the knowledge that his companion had. What I am saying here is completely in agreement with the common usage of Arabs as well as non-Arabs. When people hate a person they say, "We cannot do any good for him." Obviously, they utter that out of hatred for him and not because they are incapable of doing it. To say, "We cannot harm him" is a form of exaggeration. Similarly, for someone they love, they say, "We cannot punish him." They cannot punish him because they love him too much, not because they do not have the ability to do so. Again, when you say, "I will beat to death," you simply mean that you will beat him severely. When Allah says that they lost the power to hear, He is not excusing them. If Allah were to command only what people like, there would be chaos everywhere in the world. Allah has said, "If the Truth had been in accord with their desires, truly the heavens and the earth and all beings therein would have been in confusion and corruption" [23:71].

The author has then said, "They cannot do except what Allah imposes upon them (*yukallifuhum*) to do." What he means is that people cannot do except what Allah empowers them to do, a gift which is different from the gifts of health, power and fitness of the organs that He has bestowed upon them. And, "There is no power and no might except in Allah" is evidence that proves fore-ordainment. The author comments on it later; however, the language He has used is confusing. We do not use the word "impose upon" (*taklīf*) for "empowering" (*iqdar*); it is used only for command and prohibition. He has said, "He does not impose upon them except what they can do, and they do not do except what He has imposed upon them." Apparently, this implies that they both have the same meaning. In any case, it is not true, for people sometimes do more than what Allah commands them to do. When He commands them, He does consider their facility and their ease. He has said, "Allah

intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties" [2:185]; "Allah wishes to lighten your (burden)" [4:28]; and, "He has imposed no difficulties on you in religion" [22:78]. Hence, if He had increased our obligations, we must have been able to do them. But He has not increased them; in fact, He has charged us with less than what we can do. He has been merciful to us and has not put us into difficulty in religion. In any case, the author's language is confusing.

"Everything happens as He wills, knows and decrees." By decree (*qaḍā*) the author means the creative/cosmic/positive decree (*al-qaḍā al-kawnī*) not the religious/normative decree (*al-qaḍā ash-shar'ī*). Decree is of two kinds: cosmic and religious. Similarly will (*irādah*), command (*amr*), leave (or permission) (*idhn*), writing (*kitāb*), injunction (*ḥukm*), prohibition (*taḥrīm*) and word (*kalimah*) are all of two kinds, cosmic or creative, and religious or legislative.[578] The verse, "So He ordained them (*qaḍā hunna*) as seven firmāments in two days" [41:12], for example, uses *qaḍā* in the sense of creative decree; and the verse, "Your Lord has decreed (*qaḍā*) that you worship none but Him" [17:23], uses it in the religious/prescriptive sense.

We have already cited verses referring to the cosmic and the religious wills (*al-irādah al-kawnīyyah wa ad-dinīyyah*) while commenting on the author's words, "Nothing happens except what He wills."

As for existential command (*al-amr al-kawnī*), it is referred to in the verse, "But His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says unto it, 'Be,' and it is" [36:82]. It is also referred to in the following verse, according to the stronger opinion on this question, "When We decide to destroy a population We command (*amarnā*) the affluent among them, and they transgress, so that the word is proved against them, then He destroys them utterly" [17:16].

The legislative command (*al-amr ash-shar'ī*) is referred to in verses like, "Verily, Allah commands justice and kindness" [16:90]; and, "Verily, Allah commands you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due" [4:58].

The existential leave (*al-idhn al-kawnī*) is meant in the verse, "They could not harm with it anybody except by Allah's leave" [2:102], and the legal permission (*al-idhn ash-shar'ī*) is meant in the

[578]For a detailed discussion of this point, see Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Shifā' al-'Alil*, 270-283.

verse, "Whether you cut down the tender palm trees or left them standing on their roots, it was by leave of Allah" [59:5].

As for cosmic prescription (*al-kitāb al-kawnī*), it is referred to in the verses, "Nor is a man long-lived granted length of days, nor is a part cut off from his life, but it is in a Book. All this is easy to Allah" [35:11]; and, "Before this We wrote in the Psalms after the message (given to Moses): 'My servants, the righteous will inherit the earth'" [21:105]. The religious or legislative writing (*al-kitāb ash-shar'ī ad-dīnī*) is referred in such verses as, "We commanded (*katabnā*) therein for them: life for life, eye for eye..." [5:48], and "Believers, fasting is prescribed (*kutiba*) for you..." [2:183].

Reference to the existential command (*al-ḥukm al-kawnī*) is found in verses like, "Therefore, I will not leave this land until my father permits me, or Allah commands me, and He is the best to command" [12:80]; and, "Say: My Lord! Judge you in truth! Our Lord Most gracious is the One Whose assistance should be sought against the blasphemies you utter" [21:112]. Reference to religious injunction (*al-ḥukm ash-shar'ī*) is found in verses like, "Lawful unto you (for food) are all four-footed animals with the exception named. But animals of the chase are forbidden while you are in the Sacred Precincts or in pilgrim's garb, for Allah commands according to His will and plan" [5:2]; and, "Such is the command of Allah: He judges (with justice) between you" [60:10].

The existential prohibition (*at-taḥrīm al-kawnī*) is referred to in such verses as, "Allah said: Therefore the land will be forbidden to them for forty years, and in distraction will they wander through the land" [5:29]; and, "But forbidden it is for any population which We have destroyed that they return" [21:95]. The religious prohibition (*at-taḥrīm ash-shar'ī*) is meant in such verses as, "Forbidden to you (for food) are dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine..." [5:3], and "Prohibited to you (for marriage) are your mothers, daughters..." [4:23].

As for the existential word (*al-kalimah al-kawnīyyah*), it is referred to in the verse, "The fair word of your Lord was fulfilled for the children of Israel, because they had patience and constancy" [7:137]; and in the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him), "I take shelter in the perfect words of Allah, which neither the good nor the wicked can violate."[579] Word in the religious or legal sense (*al-kalimah ash-shar'īyyah ad-dinīyyah*) is referred to in the verse,

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[579]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

"And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain words which he fulfilled" [2:124].

The author has said, "Allah does what He wills and He is never unjust." the Qur'ān has also stressed that Allah does not do any injustice to His people. However, in this regard we should take a course between the free-willers and the determinists.[580] Whatever is wrong and unjust for man is not necessarily wrong and unjust for Allah, as the free-willers and the Mu'tazilah believe. They liken Allah to His creatures and conceive of Him on their pattern. Far exalted is He above that. He is Self-Sufficient and Powerful. Men, on the other hand, are poor, dependent upon Allah, and completely under His control. Some theologians entertain the wrong view that injustice means what Allah cannot do, and say that whatever He does cannot be unjust. Everything possible is just if He does it. The only actions which are unjust are those which violate the command of an authority, and Allah is not subject to any authority. This view is contradicted by many verses of the Qur'ān, such as, "But whoever works deeds of righteousness, and has faith will have no fear of injustice nor of any curtailment" [20:112]; "The word changes not before Me, and I do not the least injustice to My servants" [50:29]; "Nowise will We be unjust to them. It is they who have been unjust to themselves" [43:76]; "They will find all that they did placed before them, and not one will your Lord treat with injustice" [18:49]; "That Day will every soul be requited for what it earned; no injustice will there be that Day, for Allah is swift in taking account" [40:17].

That opinion is also contradicted by the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (peace be on him) quotes Allah as saying, "My servants, I have banned injustice for Me and have banned injustice for you. You must not, therefore, wrong each other."[581] Two things are clear from this *ḥadīth*. One, Allah has banned injustice for Himself, and obviously it is not the impossible which is banned. Second, His statement that He has banned injustice for Himself is just like His statement that He has imposed mercy on Himself. This contradicts the view that the application of injustice to Allah's action is ruled out because He cannot be imagined to violate the command of any authority over Him, as there is no such authority. Allah clearly says

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[580]For an elaboration of this point see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 18:137-145; Ibn Taymīyyah, *Jāmi' ar-Rasā'il*, vol. I, pp. 119-142; Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Mukhtasar aṣ-Ṣawā'iq al-Murṣalah*, vol. I, pp. 311-319.

[581]Muslim, *Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, 2577; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2497; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4257; Aḥmad, 5:154, 160, 177.

that He has imposed mercy on Himself and banned injustice. Obviously He will impose on Himself or ban for Himself only such things as He can do, not what is inconceivable.

The Elders have said that the verse, "He does not have to fear injustice or any curtailment" [20:112], means that one should not fear that the evil deeds of others will be charged to his account, or his own good deeds will be dropped from it. At another place, Allah has said, "No soul will bear the burden of another" [17:15]. Obviously, no one fears what is impossible, and no one needs to be assured against it; one needs assurance only against what is possible. Since the verse assures against injustice, it means that injustice is possible and Allah can cause it. Similarly, when Allah says, "Do not quarrel in My presence... I do not the least injustice to My servants" [50:28-29], He does not forswear what is impossible or what He cannot do; He only forswears what He can do, namely punishing for not doing anything wrong.

Again, if they are correct, Allah need not be exalted over anything, for He can do anything, and whatever He does must be good, as evil has no meaning in His context. This is plainly in conflict with the Qur'ān. Allah has said more than once that He does not do what does not behoove him, and that He is exalted far above what is evil, undesirable or meaningless, for example, "Do you then think that We had created you in jest, and that you will not be brought back to us (for account)?" [23:115]. Here He exalts Himself above creating something that has no purpose, and condemns those who attribute such an act to Him. "Will We then treat the people of faith like the people of sin?" [68:35]; or, "Will We treat those who believe and work deeds of righteousness the same as those who do mischief on earth? Will We treat those who guard against evil the same as those who turn aside from the right?" [38:28]. These verses clearly refute the view that Allah may treat the righteous and the wicked alike, and shows that Allah will not do that because it is an evil practice. Also, "What! Do those who seek after evil ways think that We will hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds - that equal will be their life and their death? What an evil judgment they make!" [45:21].

Abū Dāwūd in his *Sunan* and Al-Ḥākim in his *Al-Mustadrak* have recorded a *ḥadīth* reported by many Companions, such as Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ubādah Ibn Samit and Zayd Ibn Thābit, that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "If Allah were to punish the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, He would punish them without doing any injustice to them; and if He were to have mercy on them, His mercy

would be better than their deeds."[582] The determinists believe that this *ḥadīth* supports their view. The free-willers, on the other hand, think that it conflicts with their views; consequently they either deny it or misinterpret it.

Only the Ahl as-Sunnah accept this *ḥadīth* without any reservation. They say that it praises Allah's greatness and majesty, extols His blessings on His creatures, and underscores their failure to render what is His due, whether because of weakness, ignorance, defiance or ungratefulness; for it is His right that one should obey and not defy Him, remember and not forget Him, be thankful and not thankless to Him, strongly love Him, completely trust Him, submit to Him, fear Him and put his hopes in Him. It is our duty that we love Him, remember Him and obey Him with all our heart and all our might. This is certainly possible, but we fail in varying degrees. Some of us succeed in one respect but fail in another. There is nobody that does not defy Allah's will, and does not do, for a period long or short, what he is not created for. If Allah were to carry out His justice, He would punish the people of the heavens and the earth without doing any injustice to them. The best that people can do is repent for their sins. If Allah accepts that, it will only be a favor from Him; but if He decides to punish them for their sins, He will not be doing injustice to them, even if they repent. He has, however, decided out of mercy not to punish anyone who repents, and has imposed on Himself mercy. Hence, what saves people is His mercy and forgiveness.

Their own deeds will not save them from Hell or take them to Paradise. As the most pious man on earth, the most obedient and the most humble to Allah has said, "Nobody will be saved on account of his deeds." They said, "Not even you, Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "Not even I, except if Allah covers me with His mercy and grace."[583] His best friend asked him how to supplicate in prayer. He said, "Say, 'Lord, I have done great wrong to myself. None can pardon wrongs and forgive except You. Forgive me just as a favor from you, and have mercy on me. You are indeed Forgiving, Merciful.'"[584] If this was the condition of the person who was the best man on earth after the prophets and the messengers, you can

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[582]Part of a long *ḥadīth*, Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4699; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 77; Aḥmad, 5:182-183, 185, 189; Ibn Ḥibban, 1877; Al-Lalkā'ī, 1093, 1232. This *ḥadīth* is authentic.

[583]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

[584]Al-Bukhārī, 834, 6326, 7388; Muslim, *Adh-Dhikr wa ad-Du'ā'*, 2705; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3521, 3835; An-Nasā'ī, 3:53; Ibn Mājah, *Ad-Du'ā'*, 3835; Aḥmad, 1:4, p. 7.

think of others. In fact, he became the most righteous (*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*) just because of Allah's grace, and he attained that position by knowing Allah, by knowing His greatness and majesty, by recognizing His rights on His creature on the one hand, and recognizng his own shortcomings on the other.

Wretched is he who thinks that men do not need Allah's forgiveness and mercy. Such a person is completely ignorant of Allah and His rights. One who cannot appreciate this should think of Allah's great blessings on him, and what he ought to do for them. He should weigh his thankfulness and ingratitude. If he thinks over all this, I am sure he will realize that were Allah to punish people in the heavens and on the earth He would punish them without doing any injustice at all.

(95) We believe that the dead benefit from the prayers and charities offered by the living on their behalf.

The Ahl as-Sunnah are agreed that the dead benefit from the acts of the living in two ways.[585] They benefit, first, from the things to which they had contributed in their lives, and second, from the prayers of Muslims for their forgiveness, as well as from their charity and *ḥajj*. There is, however, some difference with respect to *ḥajj*. In the opinion of Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥassan, the deceased gets the benefits of charity, but not of *ḥajj*, which reaches only its doer. For the rest of the scholars, however, the benefit of *ḥajj* may reach anyone on whose behalf it is performed, and this is correct. As for the other acts of worship associated with one's person, like fasting, prayer, reading the Qur'ān and remembering Allah (*dhikr*), Abū Ḥanīfah, Aḥmad and the majority of the Elders believe that their benefits reach the dead. However, in the opinions of Ash-Shāfi'ī and Mālik, as they are known to people, their benefits do not reach the dead.

Some mistaken heretics claim that no benefits reach the dead from anything the living do, even supplications (*du'ā'*). They argue from the verses, "Man can have nothing but what he strives for" [53:59]; "You will be repaid the rewards of your past deeds" [36:54]; and, "It (the soul) gets what good it earns and suffers what evil it earns" [2:286]. They also cite the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him), "When a man dies his deeds come to an end. However,

[585]For a fuller discussion, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 24:306-313; Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ar-Rūḥ*, 159-193.

he continues to benefit from three things: a lasting charity, a good son who prays for him, and knowledge from which people benefit after him."[586] This *ḥadīth* mentions, they say, only those things to which one contributed to while alive, and does not say anything about those to which one did not contribute.

Some people say that the only acts of worship that can benefit are those which one is allowed to perform on behalf of others. But acts which cannot be performed on another's behalf, such as embracing the faith (Islam), praying, fasting, and reciting the Qur'ān, do not benefit the dead. They cite the *ḥadīth* which Al-Nasā'ī recorded on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Nobody can perform prayer or fast on behalf of another. However, one can give half a handful (*mudd*) of wheat for every day of fasting to the poor for his meals."[587]

Arguments in support of the view that the dead may benefit from things to which they have not contributed come from the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, Consensus (of the scholars) and valid analogy (*qiyās*).

The Qur'ān states, "Those who came after them say: 'Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who came before us into Faith'" [59:10]. This verse praises the people who pray for the forgiveness of their brethren who came before them. The implicaton is clear that the dead benefit from the prayers of their successors. The *ummah* is agreed that the dead benefit from the prayer of the living which they say at the deceased's funeral. The prayers that are mentioned in the *aḥādīth* for that occasion are well known; similarly well known are the prayers that are said after putting the dead in the grave. For example, Abū Dāwūd has reported from 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affan that the Prophet (peace be on him) stood by a grave when a dead body was placed in it and said to people around him, "Pray that Allah forgives your brother and that he does not waver when he is questioned. This is going to take place now."[588]

Visitors to the grave should also say some prayers. In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim has recorded from Buraydah Ibn Al-Husayb that the Prophet (peace be on him) used to teach them that at the time of

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[586]Muslim, *Al-Wasī'ah*, 1631; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Waṣayā*, 2880; At-Tirmidhī, Al-Aḥkam, 1376; An-Nasā'ī, 6:251; Aḥmad, 2:382.

[587]Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *Mushkil al-Āthār*, 3:141. The chain of the tradition does not go back to the Prophet (peace be on him), but stops at the Companion, Ibn 'Abbās; however, the chain is authentic. See Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ar-Rūḥ*, p. 239.

[588]Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Janā'iz*, 3221, Al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 4:56; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 1523; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:370, and Adh-Dhahabī has agreed with the Al-Ḥakīm's evaluation that the *ḥadīth* is authentic.

visiting graves one should say, "Peace be upon you, people of *imān* and Islam who are in these graves. We will also be joining you when Allah wills. We pray for peace and rest for you and for us."[589] Muslim has also recorded the *ḥadīth* wherein 'Ā'ishah asked the Prophet (peace be on him) about how to pray for people in the graves. He said, "Say: Peace be upon you, people of these houses, people of *imān* and *islām*! May Allah have mercy on those who go before us and those who will come after. We will also join you, when Allah wills."[590]

As for the question whether the benefits of charity reach the dead, there is a *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of 'Ā'ishah that a man came to the Prophet (peace be on him) and said, "My mother died suddenly and could not leave a will. If she could have, she would have bequeathed, I believe, some charity. Will she benefit if I give something in charity on her behalf?" The Prophet said, "Yes."[591] Al-Bukhārī has another *ḥadīth* in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* reported by 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās that the mother of Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah died while he was not present. Sa'd came to the Prophet (peace be on him) and said, "Messenger of Allah! My mother died while I was not present. If I give something in charity on her behalf, will it benefit her?" the Prophet said, "Yes," whereupon Sa'd said, "Bear witness that I give my garden attached to our house in charity for her."[592] There are other *aḥādīth* that express the same notion.

Regarding fasting, there is a *ḥadīth* in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s reported by 'Ā'ishah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever dies and failed to fast for any days, his heir (*wālī*) may fast on his behalf."[593] There are other *aḥādīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections to the same effect. However, Abū Ḥanīfah believes that instead of fasting one should feed the poor for those days. He argues from the *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn 'Abbās which we have mentioned above. For a

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[589]Muslim, *Al-Janā'iz*, 975; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Janā'iz*, 1547; An-Nasā'ī, 4:94; Aḥmad, 5:353, 360.

[590]Muslim, *Al-Janā'iz*, 974; An-Nasā'ī, 4:93-94; Ibn Mājah, 1546; Aḥmad, 6:180, 221.

[591]Al-Bukhārī, 1388, 2760; Muslim, 1004; Abū Dāwūd, *Al- Waṣayā*, 2881; An-Nasā'ī, 6:250; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Waṣayā*, 2717; Mālik, *Al-Muwaṭṭa*, 2:760.

[592]Al-Bukhārī, 2756, 2762, 2870; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Waṣayā*, 2882; At-Tirmidhī, *Az-Zakāh*, 669; An-Nasā'ī, 6:252-253.

[593]Al-Bukhārī, 1952, Muslim, *As-Sawm*, 1147; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sawm*, 2400; Aḥmad, 6:69.

detailed discussion on the subject, the reader may consult the books of *fiqh*.

As for *ḥajj*, Al-Bukhārī has a *ḥadīth* in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, reported by Ibn 'Abbās, that a woman from the tribe of Juhaynah came to the Prophet (peace be on him) and said, "My mother vowed to make *ḥajj* but could not do so and died. May I make the *ḥajj* for her?" the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Yes, you may do it for her. Suppose she had a debt to pay, would you not pay it for her? So the debt to Allah should be paid before every other debt."[594] On this subject also there are many more *aḥādīth*.

The *ummah* are agreed that the debts of the dead can be paid even by a stranger and from any money, even if not from his legacy. This is supported by the *ḥadīth* that when Abū Qatādah paid two dinars which he had promised to pay on behalf a dead person, the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Now his body is safe from the Fire."[595]

This is consistent with the principles of the Shari'ah, and can be derived from them through analogy (*qiyās*). The benefit of an act is the right of its doer; if he wants to transfer it to his brother, why should he be forbidden when he is not forbidden from giving a gift to someone from his money or paying off someone's debt after his death. When the Law-giver (Ash-Shāri') has said that the benefits of fasting may reach the dead, he has, in fact, indicated that the benefits of reading the Qur'ān and other acts of worship may also reach him. Fasting is abstaining intentionally from food, drink and the like. The Shāri' has clearly stated that its benefits can be passed on to the dead. There is then no reason why the benefits of reading the Qur'ān and other intentional acts of worship may not be passed on.

The argument from the verse, "Man can have nothing but what he strives for," has been answered in different ways.[596] Two of these answers are the best. One says that through a person's efforts and good behavior he gains friends, marries women and produces children, helps people and loves them. Only then do people feel for him or pray for him and offer him the benefits of their deeds. In a sense, therefore, these benefits are the results of his own efforts. In fact, simply joining the Muslim community in faith entitles one in life and after death to the benefit of prayer and other acts of the

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[594]Al-Bukhārī, 1852, 6699, 7315; An-Nasā'ī, 5:116; Aḥmad, 1:27Y.
[595]Part of a *ḥadīth*, Aḥmad, 3:330; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 1673; Al-Bayhaqī, *As-Sunan Al-Kubra*, 6:75; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 2:58. It is *ḥasan*.
[596]See also Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 24;312; Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ar-Rūḥ*, p. 169.

members of the community. Faith is a condition, as Allah has said, for benefitting by prayer and the acts of their co-religionists. Hence, if one benefits from them, one has in fact contributed towards such benefits. The second and more convincing answer is that the Qur'ān does not deny the idea of benefitting from the efforts of others. What it does deny is that one has a right over what one does not work for. This is a completely different matter. Obviously one has a right only over one's own deeds, not over the deeds of others. But it is entirely up to a person to pass on the benefits of his deeds to another or to keep them to himself.

Certainly the verses, "No bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another, and no person will have anything but what he strives for" [53:38-39], are clear. The first means that Allah does not punish anyone for the sin of another, as the kings of the world do. The second says that no one will be saved except on account of one's own deeds, so that people may give up the false expectation that they will be saved on account of the deeds of their fathers, ancestors and saints. But those verses do not say that no one can benefit from the deeds of any other.

The same is true about the verses, "For it is what it earns" [2:286], and "You will not be repaid except the rewards of your past deeds" [36:54]. Their contexts show that what they mean is that one cannot be punished for the deeds of another. The second verse, for example, continues like this, "Then, on that Day not a soul will be wronged in the least, and you will not be repaid except the rewards of your past deeds" [36:54].

Similarly, the argument from the *ḥadīth*, "When a person dies his deeds comes to an end," is not correct. It does not say that one will not benefit from the deeds of another; it only says that one's deeds will come to an end. The deeds of a person are his own; when he offers its benefits to another person what reaches the latter is the benefit of his own acts not those of the latter. And this is like paying off some one else's debt and relieving him of his responsibility which he himself cannot discharge.

As for the distinction between monetary acts and bodily acts, we have already quoted the *ḥadīth* which says that one can fast on behalf of his ward or legator, even though fasting is an act in which one cannot represent another. Further, we have the *ḥadīth* that Jābir once offered the 'Īd al-Adha prayer with the Prophet (peace be on him). After the prayer, the Prophet (peace be on him) took a lamb and sacrificed it, saying, "In the name of Allah, and Allah is great. Lord, this is from me and from those who belong to my community

but did not sacrifice."[597] This *ḥadīth* has been recorded by Ahmad, Abū Dāwūd and At-Tirmidhī. On another occasion, the Prophet (peace be on him) sacrificed two lambs. On one he said, "Lord, this is from my whole community," and on the other he said, "Lord, this is from Muḥammad and Muḥammad's family."[598] Aḥmad has recorded this *ḥadīth* also. Obviously sacrifice is an act of shedding blood, and the Prophet (peace be on him) did it on behalf of others.

Ḥajj provides another instance. It is primarily an act of the body. It does involve money, but money is only a means to it. Everyone knows that those who live in Makkah have also to make *ḥajj*, provided they can walk to 'Arafah. Obviously there is no money involved in their case. It is not made up of bodily and monetary acts; it is purely bodily. Scholars of the Ḥanafī school have clearly stated that *ḥajj* is bodily worship.

Another instance is provided by the collective duties (*furūḍ kifāyah*) in which some people discharge a duty on behalf of a whole group. These duties illustrate the principle that one can offer benefits to another. They are like making a gift of one's wages to anyone one wishes.

However, to hire people to recite the Qur'ān and offer the benefits to the deceased is an unjustified innovation (*bid'ah*). None of the Elders did it, nor has any *imām* justified it. They are one in forbidding people to hire someone to recite the Qur'ān on their behalf. The most they have differed on is the question of hiring someone to teach the Qur'ān or other things of common benefit.

The case of *thawāb* (merits) is different. It does not reach the deceased unless the action is performed for the sake of Allah. When a hired person reads the Qur'ān, he is not acting exclusively for Allah, hence its benefits cannot be offered to the deceased. This is the reason no one has allowed the hiring of somebody to fast or pray and offer the benefits to the deceased. However, if money is offered as help to those who are engaged in reading, learning, or teaching the Qur'ān, it will be considered to be charity, and its benefits may be offered to the deceased. It has been written in *Al-Ikhtiyār*[599] that if someone wills that somebody should read the Qur'ān over his

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[597] Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Aḍāḥī*, 2810; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Aḍāḥī*, 1521; Aḥmad, 3:356, 362; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 4:299. It is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

[598] Aḥmad, 6:391-392; Al-Bayhaqī, *As-Sunan al-Kubra*, 9:259-260, 268. The *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan*; see Al-Haythamī, *Majmū' az-Zawā'id*, 4:22.

[599] Abū Al-Faḍl Al-Mūṣalī, *Al-Ikhtiyār li Ta'līl al-Mukhtār* (ed. Maḥmūd Abū Daqīqah; Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifah, 1395/1975), vol. 5, p. 84.

grave and is to be paid from the money he has left, it is wrong, for it is a kind of hiring. Az-Zāhidī has also mentioned in *Al-Qunyah* that if anyone makes a *waqf* for a person to read the Qur'ān over his grave it is wrong. However, if one reads the Qur'ān for another, of his own will and not for any wages, its benefits may reach the latter, as do the benefits of fasting and *ḥajj*.

One might object and say, how can you allow it when neither did the Elders practice it nor did the Prophet (peace be on him) recommend it? The answer is that there is no difference between it and *ḥajj*, fasting and supplications. If the benefits of these actions reach the dead, the benefits of reading the Qur'ān may also reach him. If the Elders did not do it, it does not mean that its benefits will not reach the dead. There is no principle that contradicts this practice.

One might say that in the case of *ḥajj* and fasting we have the word of the Prophet (peace be on him), but we do not have anything from him about reading the Qur'ān. The answer is that the Prophet (peace be on him) did not himself expound these practices; he only responded to the questions of the people. When he was asked about *ḥajj*, he said that its benefits would reach the deceased, and when he was asked about fasting he said the same about it. He did not rule out other things, and there is no difference between fasting, which is an act of intentional abstinence from food and drink, and reading the Qur'ān as far as the transfer of benefits is concerned.

On the question of offering the benefits to the Prophet (peace be on him), some scholars of later times are of the view that it is commendable. Others say that it is an unjustified innovation (*bid'ah*) because, first, the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) did not do it, and second, because it is superfluous, as the Prophet (peace be on him) receives benefits equal to what anyone of his *ummah* receives for any good act he does, since it is he who has shown the way to everyone.

Some people have said that the deceased gets the benefit of hearing the Qur'ān when it is read at his grave. This is not the view of any recognized *imām*. It is true that the deceased hears,[600] but he does not benefit from such hearing. The benefit of hearing the Qur'ān accrues only in life. It is a voluntary act, and like all other

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[600]Qur'ānic verses 35:22 and 27:88 should not be interpreted to mean that the dead do not hear at all. There are *aḥādīth* that allude to their hearing, such as, for example, the *ḥadīth* that the angels Munkar and Nakir will question the dead in the grave and they will answer them. But that does not mean that they will hear everything.

voluntary acts it ends with death. I am afraid that, on the contrary, the deceased may feel unhappy on hearing the Qur'ān if he remembers that he did not follow the commands of the Qur'ān in his life and did not get its benefits.

As for reciting the Qur'ān over graves there are three views. Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik disapprove of it; Aḥmad also agrees with them, according to one report. Their argument is that this is an innovation; there is no *ḥadīth* to support it. Reading the Qur'ān resembles prayer, which has been prohibited on graves. However, Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥassan allows it and, according to one report, Aḥmad has also allowed it.[601] Their argument is that Ibn 'Umar advised his descendants to read the first and the last few verses of Sūrat Al-Baqarah over his grave when his body was to be buried. It has also been reported that some of the Muhājirūn recited Sūrat Al-Baqarah over graves.[602] Some people say that there is no harm in reciting the Qur'ān at the time of putting the deceased into the grave. Aḥmad agrees with this opinion in view of what has been just mentioned of Ibn 'Umar and some other Companions. He does not, however, like people to go to the graves afterwards and read the Qur'ān there, because there is no *ḥadīth* to that effect, nor has it been reported by the Elders. This is probably the best view on the subject since it takes into consideration all the points, for and against.[603]

(96) Allah answers prayers and fulfills needs.

In the Qur'ān, it states, "Your Lord says: Call on Me. I will answer your (prayer)," [40:60], and "When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them). I listen to the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me" [2:186]. The majority of mankind, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, believe that prayer is one of the most powerful means to secure good and avoid evil.[604] The Qur'ān says that when the unbelievers are in trouble at sea they call

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[601]See Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī*, vol. 2, p. 567; Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ar-Rūḥ*, p. 17.

[602]Al-Albānī points out that these narrations are probably not authentic.

[603]Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī*, vol. 2, pp. 566-567; An-Nawawī, *Al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muhadhdhab*, (Madinah: Al-Maktabah As-Salafiyyah, n.d.), vol. 5, p. 311; Ibn 'Abidīn, *Radd al-Muḥtar* (Cairo: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Arabīyyah, 1330/1911), vol. 2, pp. 242-243.

[604]Ibn Al-Qayyīm has discussed this point at length, see his *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, 3:102-105, and *Ad-Da'wa ad-Dāwā* (ed. Muḥammad Muḥiy ad-Dīn Abdul-Hāmid; Cairo: Maṭba'at Al-Madanī, 1377/1958), pp. 7-21.

on Allah and pledge their exclusive fealty to Him, and that when men are afflicted they call on Him, lying on their sides, sitting, or standing, and He answers their call whether they are believers in Him or not. Granting people's prayers is like providing for their sustenance and helping them. It is part of Allah's universal providence (*rubūbīyyah*). However, if one denies Allah and defies His commands, this favor turns into an ordeal for him, and is no longer a blessing. Ibn Mājah has recorded a *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "One who does not pray to Allah courts His anger."[605] A poet has put it this way:

> "The Lord is angry when you do not beseech Him.
> But the son of Adam is angry when you ask of him."

Ibn 'Aqil has discussed various implications of Allah liking people to call on him. First, He is not a non-existent that cannot be beseeched. Second, He is Rich and Bountiful; only the poor and indigent are not approached. Third, He hears; only the deaf are not called upon. Fourth, He is Generous; only the miserly are not begged. Fifth, He is Merciful; only the malevolent are not asked. Sixth, He is Powerful; only the weak are not implored.

Those who believe only in nature know that a fire is not asked to stop, and a star is not prayed to to grant fortunes. Their effects are produced naturally and not caused by their will. Hence, supplication and prayer have been ordained in order to demonstrate that the naturists are absolutely mistaken.

Some philosophers and a few mistaken Ṣūfis have said that supplication (*du'ā'*) is of no avail. If Allah decrees something, they say, there is no need for prayer; but if He does not, prayer is also of no use. Some even say that the perfect knowers of Allah refrain from supplicaton and consider it to be a sign of imperfection. This comes from the mistakes of some Ṣūfī sheikhs. It is repudiated and falsified by Islam as well as by common sense. It is a fact that prayer avails; all human communities have believed in it, even philosophers have said that prayers that are offered in different languages at various places of worship often remove the obstacles

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[605]Ibn Mājah, *Ad-Du'ā'*, 3827; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 1389; Aḥmad, 2:442, 447. One of the transmitters of the*ḥadīth*, Abū Ṣāliḥ Al-Khawzī, has been considered a weak transmitter by Ibn Mu'īn, though Abū Zar'ah does not find fault with him. Al-Ḥakīm has considered the *ḥadīth* authentic. See Ibn Hajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 11:79. According to Al-Albānī, it is authentic.

that are caused by the astrological heavens. They are, of course, guilty of *shirk*; but this is the common belief.

To refute the argument of those who say that prayer is of no avail, it is sufficient to point out that there are not just two alternatives here. Either Allah wills something or He does not will it. There is a third alternative, namely that He wills a thing if a condition is met.[606] Prayer could be an example of that condition. It is like the case where He rewards one for doing a good deed, and does not reward if one does not do such a deed. He removes hunger or thirst when one eats or drinks, but does not remove them when one does not do those acts. He creates a child when there is intercourse, and produces a plant when a seed is sown. The same is the case with prayer; Allah produces the object when it is prayed for. It is not at all correct to say that prayer is of no use, just as it is not correct to say that eating, drinking, sowing or other acts are of no use. What these people say goes not only against the Shar' but also against experience and reason.

Some scholars have said that to look to causes is to commit a kind of *shirk* and a breach of *tawḥīd*; however, to negate their efficacy is to fail in understanding, and to ignore them altogether is to defy the *Shar'*. One practices real trust and hope when one observes all three: *tawḥīd*, understanding, and the *Shar'*. I will explain. To look to causes means to turn one's heart to them, have hope in them, depend upon them and trust them; but the objects of the world do not deserve that trust. None of them is self-sufficient; for every cause there are other causes that work with it and that work against it. Further, if the Cause of causes does not put these causes to work, they cannot produce anything by themselves.

The statement, "If Allah wills the object desired there is no need for prayer," is not correct, for prayer may be needed for other things - to secure some other good, or remove some other evil in this life or the next. The second statement, "If Allah does not will the object, prayer is of no avail," is also not correct, for it may bring in some other good or guard against some other evil, as the Prophet (peace be on him) has said. Besides, prayer promotes God-consciousness and strengthens faith in Him. It intensifies the feeling that He is close by, that He hears us and knows us, that He is Powerful and Benevolent, and that one depends upon Him and needs Him. This leads to great knowledge and purification, which are the greatest needs.

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[606]See the discussion on this point in Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, 2:118-120, and Ad-Da'wa ad-Dāwa, pp. 18-22.

It may be said that if one's prayer prompts Allah's blessing just as a beggar's request prompts our favor, this will mean that people participate in producing divine blessings. We will point out that really it is Allah Who moves man to prayer, hence the blessing is from Him. He initiates the process and He brings it to completion. 'Umar said, "I do not bother about the acceptance of my prayer; I bother only about praying. Once I am inspired to pray, acceptance follows." Allah has said, "He rules all affairs from the heavens to the earth. Then they go up to Him on a Day which is equal to a thousand years of your reckoning" [32:5]. Thus He makes it clear that first He plans and moves things and then they rise up to Him. He moves the hearts of His creatures to prayer and makes it the cause of the favor He grants. The same is the case with deeds and their rewards. He inspires people with repentence and then accepts their repentence. He inspires them to do good deeds and then rewards them for those same good deeds. He inspires them to pray and then grants their prayers. His creatures cause nothing. He makes one act of His the cause of His other act. Mutarrif Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Ash-Shikhkhīr, an outstanding Successor, said, "I have pondered the issue, and have come to realize that things are initiated by Allah as well as completed by Him. I have also realized that all depends upon prayer (*du'ā'*)."

The question has been raised that sometimes people pray to Allah but He does not grant their prayer, or He grants what they did not pray for. Many answers have been given. I will state three of the best. First, verse 40:60 or 2:186, quoted above, does not mean that the petition is necessarily granted; it only means that Allah responds to the supplicant, and responding has a wider connotation than granting the supplicant. The Prophet said, "Our Lord comes down to the lowest heaven every night and says: Is there any one to call on (*yad'ū*) Me that I may respond to him? Is there anyone to ask of (*yas'alu*) Me that I may give him? Is there anyone to seek My forgiveness (*yastaghfiru*) that I may forgive him?"[607] He has thus differentiated between a caller (*dā'ī*) and a supplicant (*sā'il*), between response and granting. Call (*du'ā'*) includes supplication (*su'āl*), but it means more than that; similarly supplication (*su'āl*) includes seeking forgiveness (*istiqhfār*), but it also means more than that. The Prophet (peace be on him) began with the widest term, *du'ā'*, then came to the narrower term, *su'āl*, and then to the narrowest term, *istighfār*. Once Allah has told His servants that He

[607]Discussed earlier; it is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

is close to them and responds to their call, they know that He is with them and they can ask Him. They know His knowledge, mercy and power, and can call (*du'ā'*) on Him – call by way of worship (*du'ā' al-'ibadah*) and call by way of supplication (*du'ā' al-mas'alah*). *Du'ā'* is *du'ā'* of worship and *du'ā'* of supplication and sometimes it is both. Both these calls are meant in the verse, "Your Lord says: Call on Me (*ud'ū'nī*), I will answer you." the words that follow support the first sense for they say, "But those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell, in humiliation" [40:60].

The second answer is that responding to the prayer of a supplicant is more general than granting the object he prays for. It may mean to grant something else. Muslim has recorded a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whenever someone prays to Allah for something which is not unlawful, or which is not harmful to his kin, He does one of the following three things: either He immediately grants him the thing he prayed for, or He reserves for him something equally good, or He removes from him an equal evil." Hearing this, someone from the audience said, "Then we should pray more." The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah will give you even more."[608] He thus made it clear that a prayer that does not seek any evil or injustice does not go unanswered. Either it is granted immediately, or something else is kept in store instead, or the supplicant is saved from an impending evil.

The third answer runs like this. Prayer is one of the means to securing an objective. But there also may be some conditions to be fulfilled and some obstacles to be removed before the objective is achieved. When the conditions are fulfilled and the obstacles are removed, either the objective itself is secured or something else in its place is. This is true of all the prayers and supplications that have been made to bring one good or another, or remove one evil or another. Supplications are like a tool which is useful in varying degrees according to the hands using it and whether the obstacles involved are weak or strong. It often happens that a person uses a particular supplication and prays, and his prayer is granted, because along with praying, he also stresses his needs, or beseeches Allah earnestly, or does something good which Allah appreciates, or prays

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[608]The *ḥadīth* is not recorded by Muslim; it is recorded by Aḥmad, 3:18; Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *Mushkil al-Āthār*, 1:375; Abū Ya'la, *Musnad* (ed. Ḥussayn Sālim Asad; Damascus: Dār Al-Mā'mūn, 1st ed. 1406/1986), 1019; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:493. Adh-Dhahabī has endorsed Al-Ḥakīm's evaluation that the *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*. See Al-Haythamī, *Majmū' az-Zawā'id*, 10:148-149.

at a time when prayers are granted. He may, however, think that his prayer has been granted just because of the particular supplication he has made, and he neglects other factors. Suppose there is a sick man who takes good medicine and takes it at the proper times and is cured. If someone thinks that he was cured just because of that medicine he is wrong, for he does not consider other factors. Or suppose that a person in affliction goes to a grave and prays there and his prayer is granted. If he thinks that his prayer was granted because of the person in the grave, he is wrong, for that may have happened because of his affliction, or because of his earnest praying. Had he prayed in one of the houses of Allah it would certainly have pleased Allah more.

Prayers, invocations and incantations are like a sword which cuts not only because it is sharp but also because it is used with force. The effect intended is produced only when the sword is sharp, the hand that uses it is strong, the object against which it is used is something that can be cut, and there are no obstacles there. If any of these factors is lacking the desired effect will not be produced. Similarly, if the object prayed for is not correct, or the proper supplication is not chosen, or the supplicant does not pray earnestly, or there is some obstruction there, the thing besought will not be forthcoming.

(97) He controls everything, and nothing controls Him. Without Him nothing can survive for an instant. Whoever turns away from Him, even for the blinking of an eye, is ungrateful and courts His doom (*ḥayn*).

These words are quite clear and need no comment. *Ḥayn* means death and destruction.

(98) Allah becomes angry and pleased, but not like any created being.

Allah has spoken of His anger and pleasure at various places in the Qur'ān, for example, Allah says, "Allah is pleased with them" [5:122, 9:100, 98:8]; "Allah's good pleasure was on the Believers when they swore fealty to you under the tree" [48:18]; "Those who incurred the curse of Allah and His wrath..." [5:63]; "The wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him.... (4:93]; "They drew on themselves the wrath of Allah" [2:61], and so on.

The Elders and the *imāms* are agreed in predicating of Allah wrath, pleasure, enmity, friendship, love, hate and other similar things that have been mentioned in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, just

as they agree on rejecting every interpretation that robs them of their meanings as they behoove Him.[609] They think about them the same as they think about His other attributes, like hearing, seeing and speech.

The author has written earlier that in order to properly understand the Beatific Vision or any other thing relating to Allah, one must submit to the texts and abstain from interpreting them. This is the religion of Islam. Let us recall what Imām Mālik said when he was asked about *istiwā* (Allah's mounting on the Throne). "*Istiwā,*" he said "is something known, only its modality is unknown." the same words were spoken, according to one report, by Umm Salāmah and, according to another, by the Prophet (peace be on him) himself.[610]

The author has said earlier, "Whoever does not refrain from negating (Allah's attributes) or anthropomorphizing them goes astray and fails to uphold His transcendence." We will return to this point when we comment on his words, "Islam is neither to exaggerate nor to understate, neither to believe in anthropomorphisms nor to negate (Divine attributes)."

When he says that Allah's wrath or pleasure is not like that of any created being he is negating anthropomorphism. It is not correct to say that pleasure (*riḍā*) means nothing more than the will to bless, or that wrath (*ghaḍab*) means nothing but the will to avenge. That would be simply negating these attributes. The Ahl as-Sunnah agree that Allah commands what He loves and approves of, even though He does not will it. Also, He forbids what He dislikes and disapproves of, even though He hates its doer, though He wills it and allows it to happen. Thus, He likes something even though He does not will it, and dislikes something else even though He wills it.

Those who interpret Allah's pleasure and anger in terms of the will to do some favor or inflict some pain say that they resort to this interpretation because anger implies a rise in blood temperature and pleasure is an emotional state, neither of which behooves Allah. This is not true, for the rise in blood temperature in humans is an effect of anger, not anger itself. On the other hand, will in human beings is a kind of inclination towards something or towards what is good or useful. We do not will except what brings us some good or wards off some evil. We do need what we will, benefit from it when we get it, and suffer when we do not. If this is what will means, then those who interpret Allah's anger and pleasure in this manner

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609 See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Dar' Ta'āruḍ al-'Aql wa an-Naql*, 3:380-385.

610 It is not established that the Prophet said these words, as was discussed earlier.

do not gain anything, for what they affirm is no better than what they deny; their implications are equally undesirable. Now, if you allow the one, you can allow the other, but if you rule out the one you should rule out the other, too.

One might say that Allah's will is different from human will, even though both are real. We accept that but point out that this is also the case with Allah's anger and pleasure. They, too, are different from human anger and pleasure, even though both are real. What you say about will can also be said about these attributes, and there is no need to interpret them; you must avoid that if you want to be consistent. It will save you not only from inconsistency but also from negating Allah's names and attributes without any justification. You must know that to interpret the Qur'ān in a sense different from what it plainly means without a compelling reason is forbidden. And that reason cannot be something which your or my reason demands, for reason varies, and what one demands may not be what the other demands.

This is the argument we advance against anyone who denies the attributes of Allah on the grounds that it behooves man but not Allah. We say to him that he cannot help predicating something of Allah in a sense different from what he is aware of. At least he must say that Allah exists in a sense different from the existence of man, for while man is mortal, Allah is not. The same is true of all the names that Allah has given to Himself and to His creatures such as living, knowing, powerful. It is also true of the attributes He has predicated of Himself and of His creatures, such as anger and pleasure. We know in our hearts what these names mean in the divine context, and know that they are real and true. We also know what they mean in the human context. We further know that there is something common between the two meanings; however, this common meaning does not exist as such out there, for as a rule, universal ideas do not exist as universals except in the mind; out there in reality they exist only in particularized and specified form.

Hence these attributes exist in Allah and in His creatures in forms behooving each. Even the anger of Mālik, the angel who is the overseer of Hell, or that of the other angels, differs from the anger of human beings, for the angels are not formed of the four elements of which humans are formed, and their blood does not boil in anger like human blood. If this is the case with angels, what do you think about Allah?

Al-Jahm and many others like him negate the attributes of speech, pleasure, anger, love, hate, grief and so on which Allah has predicated of Himself. They say that these things are created by Allah's will, so they do not exist in Him and are not His attributes.

On the other hand, Ibn Kullāb and other attributionists (ṣifatīyyah) say that none of His attributes are objects of His will and power; all of them are His essential attributes, inseparable from His Essence, eternal and everlasting. He is not, therefore, pleased at one time and displeased at another, angry on one occasion and not angry on another. This also goes against the *ḥadīth*. For example, the famous *ḥadīth* on intercession states, "My Lord is so angry today as He never was before, nor will He ever be afterwards."[611]

Another *ḥadīth*, which is reported by Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī and recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, says, "Allah will give a call (on the Day of Judgment): 'People of Paradise!' They will say, 'Here we are, Lord! You are blessed. All good is in your hands.' He will inquire, 'Are you happy?' 'Why not, Lord?' they will say, 'You gave us what you did not give to any other of Your creatures.' He will say, 'Should I not give something better than what you have!' They will say, 'Lord, what can be better than what we have?' He will say, 'I will give you My pleasure, and never will I ever be angry with you afterwards.'"[612]

These *aḥādīth* prove that Allah is sometimes pleased and sometimes not, that He is pleased at one time and gets angry at another, that He is angered and then pleased, and that on the people of Paradise He will bestow His pleasure forever. But those people of the opposite opinion deny that Allah speaks, smiles, is angered or pleased as He will. Either they identify His pleasure, love, anger and hate with His will, or they reduce them to some other attributes. In either case they avoid making them the object of His will and power, for otherwise Allah would be, in their opinion, infected by contingent things. In this way they negate all the active attributes of Allah. The Jahmīyyah, on the other hand, deny the whole gamut of divine attributes on the plea that they make Allah the locus of incidents. They fail to see that these things are actions, not events, attributes not incidents.

We have discussed this point before. It is unfortunate that the author did not put all the statements regarding divine attributes in one place; he also did not discuss predestination (*qadr*) in one place, nor did he follow any order. In a work on the fundamentals of Islam, the best order that a writer can follow is the one which the Prophet (peace be on him) followed in his answer to the questions of Gabriel about *īmān*. He said, "Faith is that you believe in Allah,

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[611] Discussed earlier; it is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

[612] Al-Bukhārī, 6549, 7518; Muslim, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2829; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2558; Aḥmad, 3:88.

His angels, His books, His prophets, the Last Day, and that the fore-ordainment of everything, good and bad, is from Allah."[613] One should begin with *tawḥīd*, the divine attributes and related matters, and then discuss the angels and other things in that order.

(99) We love all the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him), but we do not love any one of them to excess, nor do we disown any of them. We hate those who hate them or speak ill of them. We always mention them in positive terms, and believe that to love them is part of the religion, part of *īmān* and *iḥsān*; and that to hate them is infidelity, hypocrisy and transgression.

This is directed against the Rawāfiḍ and the Nawāṣib. Allah and His Prophet have praised the Companions time and again. Allah has also said that He is well-pleased with them and will amply reward them.[614] Allah's words are, "The vanguard (of Islam), the first of those who forsook (their homes) and of those who gave them aid, and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds – well-pleased is Allah with them, as are they with Him. He has prepared for them gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme felicity" [9:100]. Elsewhere He has said, "Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, but compassionate among one another. You will see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), seeking grace from Allah and His good pleasure. On their faces are their marks, being the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude in the Torah; and their similitude in the Gospel is a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong, then becomes thick and stands on its own stem (filling) the sowers with wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the unbelievers with rage at them.

Allah has promised to those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness and a great reward" [48:29]; "Allah's good pleasure was on the Believers when they swore fealty to you under the Tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down tranquility to them, and He rewarded them with a speedy victory" [48:18]; "Those who believed and adopted exile, and fought for the Faith with their property and their persons in the cause of Allah, as well as those who gave them asylum and aid –

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[613]Discussed earlier; it is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

[614]Ibn Taymīyyah has discussed the point at various places; see *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 3:152-153, 405-409; 4:398-465; 35:58-64.

these are all friends and protectors, one of another... These are (all) in very truth the Believers; for them is the forgiveness of sins and a provision most gracious" [8:72-73]; "Not equal among you are those who spent (freely) and fought before the victory (with those who did so later). Those are higher in rank than those who spent (freely) and fought afterwards. But to all has Allah promised a goodly (reward). And Allah is well acquainted with all that you do" [57:10]; "(Some part is due) to the indigent Muhājirūn, those who were expelled from their homes and their property while seeking grace from Allah and (His) good pleasure and aiding Allah and His Messenger. Such are indeed the sincere ones. But those who before them had homes (in Madinah) and had adopted the Faith, show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their own lot, and those saved from the covetousness of their own souls, they are the ones that achieve prosperity. And those who came after them say: 'Our Lord, forgive us, and our brethren who came before us unto the Faith, and leave not in our hearts rancor or (sense of injury) against those who have believed. Our Lord, You are indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful'" [59:8-10].

These verses praise the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār and those who came after them, who sought Allah's forgiveness for them and prayed that He leave no ill-feeling in their hearts for them. They underline the fact that these people deserve the grace Allah has bestowed upon them, and that those who have any ill-feeling against them or do not pray for their forgiveness, do not deserve any favor from Allah. This is clearly stated in the Qur'ān.

The *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim contain a *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī that something happened between Khālid Ibn Al-Walīd and 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf, whereupon the former said some unpleasant words to the latter. The Prophet (peace be on him) took exception to it and said, "Do not abuse any of my Companions. Were any one of you to spend heaps of gold equivalent to Mount Uḥud, you would not attain even the virtue of a *mudd* or half thereof of one of them."[615] The incident concerning Khālid's abusing 'Abdur-Raḥmān is mentioned only by Muslim and not Al-Bukhārī.

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[615]Al-Bukhārī, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 3673; Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2541; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4658; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3860; Aḥmad, 3:11, 54.

By his Companions the Prophet (peace be on him) meant 'Abdur-Raḥmān and others like him who had embraced Islam in the early years before Makkah was captured and who had fought for Islam. They were the people who swore their fealty to the Prophet (peace be on him) under the tree. They were better and more honored than those who entered into the faith afterwards, that is, after the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah, which the Prophet (peace be on him) concluded with the Makkans. Khālid Ibn Al-Walīd embraced Islam along with others in this later period. To be sure, they were better than those who embraced Islam after Makkah was conquered and those are known as *tulaqa*, that is, those who were forgiven and set free. This group included Abū Sufyān and his sons, Yazīd and Mu'āwīyah.

The burden of the *ḥadīth* is that those who joined the Prophet's company later should not speak ill of those who had joined his company earlier since they had honor no other Companions had and could not have, even if they spent gold equal to Mount Uḥud. If this is about those who embraced Islam after the Treaty of Hudaybīyyah and before the conquest of Makkah, what of those who never joined the Prophet's company? May Allah be pleased with all his Companions!

The vanguard of the Companions, the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, were the ones who spent their money in the cause of Allah before the Conquest of Makkah and fought for Allah's sake. They include those who swore fealty to the Prophet (peace be on him) under the tree. They were more than one thousand four hundred. Some say that they were the ones who prayed first towards Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and then towards the Ka'bah when the *qiblah* was changed. This is a weak opinion. To offer prayer towards a *qiblah* which was changed later is not an honor as it was not of their own doing. There is no text to support this view. On the other hand, we have the verses of the Qur'ān that laud those who embraced Islam before the conquest of Makkah, spent and fought in the way of Allah and swore fealty under the tree.

However, the *ḥadīth* ascribed to the Prophet (peace be on him), "My Companions are like stars, whomsoever you follow you will be on the right path,"[616] is a weak *ḥadīth*. Al-Bazzār has said that it

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[616]Ibn 'Abdul-Barr, *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Faḍlihi*, 2:91; Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Iḥkam*, 6:82; Al-Khātīb Al-Baghdādī, *Al-Kifāyah fī 'Ilm ar-Riwāyah* (Hyderabad; reprint, Beirut: Al-Maktabah Al-'Ilmīyyah, n.d.), p. 48. The *ḥadīth* is very weak.

should not be ascribed to the Prophet (peace be on him), for it has not been mentioned in any reliable collection of *ḥadīth*.

Muslim has recorded a tradition reported by Jābir that 'Ā'ishah was told that some people found fault with the Companions of the Prophet, even with Abū Bakr and 'Umar. She said, "Why should you wonder! The actions (of these Companions) have ended, but Allah has willed that their rewards should not."[617]

Ibn Baṭṭah has recorded, with an authentic chain, the narration that Ibn 'Abbās said, "Do not abuse the Companions of Muḥammad (peace be on him). An hour of their life with the Prophet (peace be on him) was better than forty years of your deeds now."[618] In a variant of this narration reported through Wakī, the words are, "Better than your life-long worship."

The *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim record a *ḥadīth* reported by 'Imrān Ibn Ḥussayn and others that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The best people are the people of my period; next are those that will come after them; and then those who will come after them." 'Imrān said that he was not sure whether the Prophet mentioned two or three periods after his own.[619] Muslim has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* a *ḥadīth* reported by Jābir in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "None of those who swore fealty under the tree will enter Hell."[620]

Allah has said, "Allah turned with favor to the Prophet, the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār who followed him in a time of distress, after the hearts of part of them had nearly swerved (from duty); but He turned to them (also), for He is Most Kind and Most Merciful unto them" [9:117].

'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd was correct when he said in their praise, "Allah looked at the hearts of men and found that the best heart was the heart of Muḥammad (peace be on him). So He chose him for Himself, and made him His messenger. He looked for a second time at the hearts of the people other than Muḥammad (peace be on him), and found that the best hearts were those of his Companions. So He selected them to assist his Prophet and fight for His religion. Hence,

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[617]This statement is not in Muslim, nor in any other book of *Hadith*.

[618]Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 162; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *As-Sunan* (ed. Nāṣir Ad-Dīn Al-Albānī; Beirut: Al-Maktab Al-Islāmī, 1st ed. 1400/1980; henceforth referred only as Ibn Abī 'Āṣim), *ḥadīth* 1006. The chain of the *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[619]Al-Bukhārī, 2561, 3650, 6428, 6695; Muslim, 2535; At-Tirmidhī, 679, 2221, 2222, 2303; Abū Dāwūd, 4657; An-Nasā'ī, 7:17-18; Aḥmad, 4:426, 427, 436, 440.

[620]Muslim, 2496; At-Tirmidhī, 3859; Abū Dāwūd, 4653; Aḥmad, 6:362, 420.

what the Muslims consider to be good is good in the eyes of Allah, and what they consider to be bad is bad in His eyes."[621] In a variant of this narration, Ibn Mas'ūd is also reported to have added, "And the Companions of Muḥammad (peace be on him) unanimously selected Abū Bakr as his successor." Commenting on the author's words, "We follow the Sunnah and the *jamā'ah*" we have already mentioned Ibn Mas'ūd's words, "Whoever of you wants an example to follow should follow the example of those who have died."

Who could be more astray than those who have rancor in their hearts against the people who are the cream of the Muslim community and the most honored of Allah's friends after the prophets? They are, in a sense, worse than the Jews and Christians, for if the Jews are asked who the best of their community were, their answer is the companions of Moses. Similarly, if the Christians are asked about the best of their community, they say they were the companions of Jesus. But when these Rawafiḍ are questioned as to who are the worst of their community, they say the Companions of Muḥammad (peace be on him). They make exception only for a few. But if you compare them, you will find that many of those whom they malign are many times better than those they do not.

The author said, "We do not love any one of them to excess." What he means is that we do not exceed the limits in our love as the Shī'īs do, nor do we violate Allah's word, "People of the Book! Commit no excess in your religion" [4:171].

The author has further said, "Nor do we disown any of them." That is, we are not guilty of the mistake the Rawafiḍ commit. They believe that to be loyal to the family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) one has to disown Abū Bakr and 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with them. The Ahl as-Sunnah are loyal to all the Companions and give every one his due, justly and properly. They know that injustice in this regard is a transgression which Allah has condemned. He has said, "They differed not until after the knowledge came unto them through transgression one against the other" [45:17]. This is the meaning of the words, "To testify is an innovation, and to disown is an innovation." This has been said by a number of Elders,

[621] Aḥmad, 1:379; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 8582, 8583, 8593; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 246; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 105. The chain of the *ḥadīth* is good (*ḥasan*); Al-Ḥakīm has evaluated it as *ṣaḥīḥ* (see *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:78) and Adh-Dhahabī has endorsed his judgment (see Al-Haythamī, *Majmū' az-Zawā'id*, 1:177-178).

Companions and Successors, such as Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī, Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣrī, Ibrāhīm Al-Nakhā'ī, Ad-Duḥḥāk, and others. To testify here means to testify about any Muslim that he will go to Hell or that he is an infidel, without knowing on what faith he died.

As for the statement, "To love them is part of *īmān* and *iḥsān*," it follows from the verses and the *aḥādīth* we have quoted above. Besides, At-Tirmidhī has recorded a *ḥadīth* reported by 'Abdullah Ibn Mughaffal that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "O Allah, O Allah, my companions. Do not malign them after me. Whoever loves them, loves them as a part of his love for me; and whoever hates them, hates them as a part of his hatred for me. Whoever displeases them displeases me, and whoever displeases me displeases Allah, and whoever displeases Allah exposes himself to His punishment."[622]

The author has made love for the Companions a part of faith (*īmān*). But this is difficult to justify with respect to his view of *īmān*. Love is an act of the heart, not simply conviction. This means that action is a part of *īmān*. But for Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *īmān* is a confession with the tongue and conviction of the heart and does not include action, which is the well-known view of Abū Ḥanīfah. Maybe he has called love a part of faith in a metaphorical sense.

The word *kufr* in the sentence, "to hate them is *kufr*..." does not mean disbelief. We have already discussed the author's views on excommunication (*takfīr*). What he means by *kufr* here is same as in the verse, "If any do fail to judge by the light of what Allah has revealed, they are the disbelievers" [5:47]. We have discussed this point earlier.

(100) We affirm that, after the Prophet (peace be on him), the first rightful heir to the *khilāfah* was Abū Bakr, on the grounds that he was the best and the most eminent of all the *ummah*.

There are different opinions among the Ahl as-Sunnah concerning the question of what the basis was for the *khilāfah* of

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[622]At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3862; Aḥmad, 4:87, 5:54, 57; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 992; Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilya*, 8:287. But one of the transmitters of this *ḥadīth*, 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Zayad, is not accepted by many scholars. Ibn Mu'īn says that he does not know him, Adh-Dhahabī says that he is not known. Only Ibn Ḥibban regards him to be reliable (see his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2284), but Ibn Ḥibban is known for accepting unknown narrators. However, in the opinion of At-Tirmidhī, the *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan gharīb*.

Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq, may Allah be pleased with him. Was it by textual evidence or by selection? Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣrī and a group of *ḥadīth* scholars say that it is implied and suggested by various texts. Others say that it is clearly established by the texts. A third group, consisting of some *ḥadīth* scholars and some Mu'tazilah and Ash'arīs, says that he was made caliph through selection.

The proponents of the first view quote many *aḥādīth*. One which is recorded by Al-Bukhārī from Jubayr Ibn Muṭ'im says that a woman came to the Prophet (peace be on him) asking for something, but he sent her back and asked her to come again. She said, "If I come back and do not find you what should I do?" as if she thought he might die. The Prophet (peace be on him) replied, "If you do not find me, go to Abū Bakr."[623] These words have also been narrated in a different context in other *aḥādīth*. This clearly proves the *khilāfah* of Abū Bakr. Ḥudhayfah Ibn Al-Yamān narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Follow the examples of those who will come after me, Abū Bakr and 'Umar."[624] This *ḥadīth* has been recorded in the *Sunan* collections. The *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have a *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Ā'ishah, as well as her father Abū Bakr, that the Prophet (peace be on him) came to her the day he fell ill, and asked her to call her father and brother so that he could dictate a will to the former. Then he said, "Allah and the Muslims will never accept anyone other than Abū Bakr." A variant of the *ḥadīth* also has the sentence, "So that no one else may aspire to this thing." In another variant the words are, "Call 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakr. I will dictate a will for Abū Bakr so that there will not be any differences about him." He then said, "Allah forbid that the Believers should disagree on Abū Bakr."[625]

As for Abū Bakr's preeminence, it is enough to say that the Prophet (peace be on him) asked him to lead the prayers when he fell ill. He said, "Tell Abū Bakr to lead the prayers."[626] He said that

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[623]Al-Bukhārī, 3659, 7220, 7360; Muslim, 2386; Aḥmad, 4:82, 83; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 944; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1151; Al-Baghawī, 3868.

[624]At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3663, 3664; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 97; Aḥmad, 5:382, 385, 399, 402. At-Tirmidhī has rated the *ḥadīth ḥasan*, and Al-Ḥakīm has held it to be *ṣaḥīḥ* (*Al-Mustadrak*, 3:75). According to Al-Albānī, it is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[625]Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2387; Aḥmad, 6:47, 106, 144; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 1508; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1156; Al-Baghawī, 1411. Al-Bukhārī has recorded the *ḥadīth* with a different wording; see *ḥadīth* 5666, 7217.

[626]Part of a*ḥadīth*, Al-Bukhārī, 664, 679, 712, 713, 716, 3383, 7303; Ad-Dārimī, *Sunan*, 1:39; Aḥmad, 6:96, 159, 202, 224; At-Tirmidhī, 3672; An-Nasā'ī, 2:99-100;

and for all the days that he was ill Abū Bakr led the prayer. The two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s also have a *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I saw in a dream that I was at a well and there was a bucket there. I took it and drew as much water from the well as Allah wanted me to draw. Then Abū Bakr took the bucket from me and drew once or twice. He was a little weak in drawing, but Allah will forgive him. Then the bucket grew larger and Ibn Al-Khaṭṭab took it from him. I never saw a man gigantic like him. He drew so well that everyone drank his fill."[627] There is also another *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*: the Prophet (peace be on him) said at the pulpit, "If I were to take someone for an intimate friend (*khalīl*), I would take Abū Bakr. Let all the windows to the mosque be closed except the window of Abū Bakr."[628]

In *Sunan* Abī Dāwūd and other works there is the *ḥadīth* reported by Ash'ath, from Al-Ḥassan, on the authority of Abū Bakrah, that one day the Prophet (peace be on him) asked the people, "Who has seen a dream?" One man said, "I have. I saw that a balance came down from the sky. You and Abū Bakr were weighed and you outweighed Abū Bakr. Then Abū Bakr and 'Umar were weighed, and Abū Bakr outweighed 'Umar. Then 'Umar and 'Uthmān were weighed and 'Umar outweighed 'Uthmān. Then the balance was lifted." Abū Bakrah says that at that moment he looked at the Prophet's face and he was unhappy. He said, "This was the *khilāfah* on the pattern of prophetic rule (*khilafatu nubūwwah*). Allah will then hand over the government to whom he pleases."[629] This means that according to the Prophet (peace be on him) the

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Ibn Mājah, 1232. See also Al-Bukhārī, 678, 3380, 682; Muslim, 420; Aḥmad, 4:412-413, 1:209; Ibn Ḥibban, 2174.

[627]Al-Bukhārī, 3664, 7021, 7022, 7475 and 3663, 3676, 3682, 7019, 7020; Muslim, 2392, 2393; At-Tirmidhī, 2289; Aḥmad, 2:368, 450, and 2:27, 28, 39, 89, 104, 107.

[628]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

[629]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4634; At-Tirmidhī, *Ar-Ru'ya*, 2288; Aḥmad, 5:44, 50; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1135; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf fī al-aḥādīth wa al-Āthār*, (ed. Muḥammad 'Abdul-Khāliq and others; Bombay: Dār As-Salafīyyah, 1399/1402), 12:18; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:70-71; Al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwah* (ed. 'Abdul-Mu'īt Qala'jī; Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmīyyah, 1405/1985), 6:348. All these *aḥādīth* have been recorded from Abū Bakrah and are *ṣaḥīḥ* except their last words, "the *khilāfah* of prophethood, then Allah will give His kingdom to whom He will." One of the transmitters of this part, 'Alī Ibn Zayd Ibn Jad'ān, is a poor transmitter. However, the weakness of this part of the *ḥadīth* is made up for by the *ḥadīth* reported by Ṣafīnah that will follow.

khilāfah of these three caliphs was on the pattern of prophetic government. Then came the monarchy. 'Alī is not mentioned in this *ḥadīth* because people did not agree on one ruler during his time and were divided. There was neither a *khilāfah* on the prophetic pattern nor a monarchy.

Abū Dāwūd has also recorded that Jābir used to narrate that one morning the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "A pious man was shown in dream tonight that Abū Bakr came following the Messenger of Allah, and 'Umar came following Abū Bakr, and 'Uthmān came following Umar." Jābir says that when people got up and went away from the Prophet (peace be on him) they said that the "pious man" was none other than the Prophet himself (peace be on him), and the coming of one following the other meant that they would take charge of things, one after the other, which Allah had entrusted to his Prophet.[630]

Abū Dāwūd has recorded a third *ḥadīth* from Samurah Ibn Jundab that a man came to the Prophet (peace be on him) and said, "Messenger of Allah, I saw that a bucket was suspended from the sky. Abū Bakr came and took it by the brim and drank from it, but he did not drink much. Then 'Umar came and took it by its brim, and drank from it a lot, until he was satisfied. Then 'Uthmān came and took it by its brim, he also drank from it to his fill. Then 'Alī came and took it by its brim, but the rope snapped and part of the water spilled over him."[631] It has been reported by Sa'īd Ibn Jumḥan, from Ṣafīnah, that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The *khilāfah* of prophethood will last for thirty years, then Allah will give (His) Kingdom to whom He will."[632]

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[630] Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4636; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1134; Aḥmad, 3:355. Al-Ḥakīm has called this *ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ* (see *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:71-72), and Adh-Dhahabī has endorsed his view, even though 'Amr Ibn Ḥibban, who has reported the *ḥadīth* from Jabir, has not been considered reliable (*thiqah*) by anyone except Ibn Ḥibban (see his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 7:216). Al-Albānī considers it a weak *ḥadīth*.

[631] Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4637; Aḥmad, 5:21; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1141; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 6965. One of the transmitters of the *ḥadīth*, 'Abdur-Raḥmān Al-Jarmī, has not been considered reliable by anyone except Ibn Ḥibban. Al-Albānī considers it a weak *ḥadīth*.

[632] Abū Dāwūd, 4646, 4647; Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *Mushkil al-Āthār*, 4:313; Aḥmad, 5:220-221; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 2:562; At-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 13, 136, 6442; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 1107; Al-Bayhaqī, Dalā'il an-Nubuwwah, 6:341; At-Tirmidhī, 2226 with the remark that the *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan*. Al-Ḥakīm has evaluated it as *ṣaḥīḥ* (see *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:71, p. 145).

Those who say that the Prophet did not appoint Abū Bakr his caliph (successor) argue from the tradition which 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar has reported. When the question arose who would succeed him, 'Umar said if he appointed a caliph there would be no harm, for one who was better than he had appointed his caliph. He was referring to Abū Bakr. But if he did not appoint a caliph, he said, there was no harm in that either, for one who was far, far better than he had not appointed his caliph. He was referring, of course, to the Prophet (peace be on him). 'Abdullah says that when 'Umar mentioned the Prophet (peace be on him), he knew he would not appoint anybody as his caliph.[633] They also argue from the report that says that 'Ā'ishah was asked whom the Prophet (peace be on him) would have appointed caliph if he had intended to appoint one.[634]

This report implies that the Prophet (peace be on him) did not have a written will on the *khilāfah* for anyone, and had he intended to will it, he would have willed it to Abū Bakr. In fact he intended to dictate a will but then abstained from doing so, saying, "Allah and the Muslims will not accept anyone except Abū Bakr."[635] This was more than a will. The Prophet (peace be on him) did indicate that he wanted Abū Bakr to be the caliph. He indicated it in many ways, in words as well as deeds. He also said that he would be happy with his *khilāfah*, and that it would be a good *khilāfah*. He even intended to dictate a will in his favor, but seeing that Muslims would certainly agree on him, he gave up the idea. On the Thursday during his illness, he once again intended to write a will. But when some people doubted whether that was the result of illness or whether he really wanted to dictate a will,[636] he dropped the idea. He was confident that Allah and the Muslim community would surely chose Abū Bakr.

Had he thought that his preference for Abū Bakr was not clear to the *ummah*, he would have declared it clearly and explicitly. Since he had made his preference very clear and people had got it, the purpose was served. This is why at the gathering of the Muhājirūn

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[633]Al-Bukhārī, 7218; Muslim, 1823; At-Tirmidhī, 2225; Abū Dāwūd, 2939; Aḥmad, 1:47.

[634]Part of a *ḥadīth*, Muslim, 2385; the other part is: "She said, 'Abū Bakr.' She was further asked, 'After Abū Bakr, who?' She said, ''Umar.' She was then asked again, 'After 'Umar, who?' She said, 'Abū 'Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraḥ.'" See also Aḥmad, 6:63.

[635]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

[636]See Al-Bukhārī, 7366, and 114, 3053, 3168, 4431, 4432, 5669, 7366; Muslim, 1637, 2387. See Ibn Hajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 1:208-209.

and the Anṣār, 'Umar addressed Abū Bakr and said, "You are the best among us, you are our leader, and you are most dear to the Prophet,"[637] and no one refuted him or said that someone else from the Muhājirūn deserved the *khilāfah* better. Only some Anṣār disagreed and suggested that there should be two emirs, one from the Muhājirūn and one from the Anṣār – a suggestion that conflicts with many a *ḥadīth* reported with *tawatur*. At the end of the meeting, however, all the Anṣār pledged fealty to Abū Bakr, except Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah, who put in his own claim to the *khilāfah*. Contrary to what some misguided people say, no Companion ever claimed that the Prophet (peace be on him) willed anyone other than Abū Bakr to be his caliph. Neither 'Alī nor 'Abbās, nor anyone else claimed it, as some heretics claim.

Ibn Baṭṭah has recorded a *ḥadīth* with a proper chain of transmitters that 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-'Azīz sent Muḥammad Ibn Az-Zubayr Al-Ḥanẓali[638] to Al-Ḥassan to ask him whether the Prophet (peace be on him) had appointed Abū Bakr to be his caliph. Al-Ḥassan said, "Does your commander have any doubt about it? By the One besides Whom there is no god, the Prophet (peace be on him) did appoint him. He was the most God-fearing of all, and none would have ever thought of competing with him."

To sum up, those who say that the Prophet (peace be on him) wanted to appoint as caliph someone other than Abū Bakr cannot produce any text to support their view or even to prove that anyone was better than he and deserved the *khilāfah* more. They have been prejudiced by love of their tribe or people. They are not unaware of the position of Abū Bakr and of the love which the Prophet (peace be on him) had for him. The two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s have a *ḥadīth* reported by 'Amr Ibn Al-'Āṣ that at the time the Prophet (peace be on him) appointed him commander of the campaign of Dhāt As-Salāsil, he came to him and asked, "Who is most dear to you?" the Prophet replied, "'Ā'ishah." He said, "I mean from among the men." He said, "Her father." He asked, "Who next?" He answered, "'Umar," and then named some others.[639]

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[637]Recorded by Al-Bukhārī.

[638]Hadīth scholars are critical of Muḥammad Ibn Az-Zubayr Al-Ḥanẓalī. Ibn Mu'īn and An-Nasā'ī consider him to be a weak (*ḍā'if*) narrator of *ḥadīth*; Abū Ḥātim, Al-Bukhārī and Shū'bah do not accept his *aḥādīth*; and Ibn 'Adīy says that he narrates strange *aḥādīth* that are not narrated by anyone else. See Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* (Hyderabad, India, 1326 A. H.), vol. 9, p. 16.

[639]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

Two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s also have the *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Ad-Dardā' that he was sitting with the Prophet (peace be on him) when Abū Bakr came, lifting a corner of his gown so that his knees were exposed. Seeing him, the Prophet (peace be on him) said to the people around, "It seems that your friend has had a dispute." Abū Bakr greeted them and said, "Messenger of Allah, something happened between me and 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb. I rushed to him, expressed my regrets and begged his pardon, but he refused to pardon me. That is why I have come to you." the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "May Allah forgive you, Abū Bakr," and repeated the words three times. 'Umar then felt very sorry and went to Abū Bakr's house to inquire about him. He was told that Abū Bakr was not at home. Then he went to the Prophet (peace be on him) and greeted him. The Prophet's face turned grave. Abū Bakr saw it and got up on his knees, and said, "Messenger of Allah, by Allah, I was the one who was in the wrong." He said it twice, whereupon, addressing the people around him, the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah sent me as a messenger to you and you denied me. But Abū Bakr bore witness that I was truthful. He also helped me with his money and his person. Will you not leave my friend for me? Will you not leave my friend for me?" Thereafter Abū Bakr was never harmed anymore.[640] It is not possible to discuss the merits of Abū Bakr in detail in this short work.

The two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s record that 'Ā'ishah said that when the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) died, Abū Bakr was at As-Sunḥ. She then narrated what happened and said, "The Anṣār gathered around Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah in the Hall of Banū Sā'idah and said, 'There should be one emir from us, and one from you.' Abū Bakr, 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb and Abū 'Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarrāḥ were with them. 'Umar wanted to speak, but Abū Bakr asked him to keep silent. Later, 'Umar said that he had prepared a very impressive speech for the occasion and was not sure whether Abū Bakr would deliver a speech as good as his. However, Abū Bakr spoke and spoke better than anyone could have. At the end of the speech he said, 'The emirs will be from us and the viziers from you.' Thereupon Ḥubāb Ibn Al-Mundhir said, 'No, we will not accept that. There will be one emir from us, and one emir from you.' Abū Bakr said, 'No, we will be the emirs and you will be the viziers.

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[640]Al-Bukhārī, 3661, 4640; Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *Mushkil al-Āthār*, 2:288; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1223. But Muslim has not recorded the *ḥadīth*.

And you know that they (the Quraysh) are the best and the most noble of all the Arabs. Pledge your fealty to either 'Umar or Abū 'Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarrah. 'Umar said, 'No, we will pledge fealty to you. You are our leader, the best among us, and the most dear to the Messenger of Allah. Then he took the hand of Abū Bakr and pledged his fealty to him. Thereafter people pledged him their fealty. Someone said, 'You have destroyed Sa'd.' 'Umar said, 'No, Allah destroyed him.'"[641] As-Sunh was a place in the suburbs of Madinah that was famous for its gardens.

(101) The second heir to the *khilāfah* was 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him.

We affirm that, after Abū Bakr, the next heir to the kh*ilā*fah was 'Umar. Abū Bakr handed over the *khilāfah* to him and the *ummah* rallied round him after Abū Bakr. As for the merits of 'Umar, they are too well known to be denied and too many to be counted. Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥanafiyyah says that he asked his father, 'Alī, who was the best man after the Prophet (peace be on him). 'Alī said, "Son, don't you know who?" He said, "No." 'Alī said, "It is Abū Bakr." He asked, "Then who?" 'Alī said, "'Umar." Ibn Al-Ḥanafiyyah says that he feared that if he asked again, his father would say 'Uthmān, so he said, "Then you?" 'Alī said, "I am only a Muslim among other Muslims."[642]

I have already mentioned the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Follow those who will come after me, Abū Bakr and 'Umar." Muslim has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that Ibn 'Abbās said, "When 'Umar was placed in his coffin, people gathered round him, prayed for him and eulogized him. I was also there. Someone caught hold of my shoulder from behind. I turned around and it was 'Alī. He addressed the body of 'Umar and said, 'You did not leave behind anyone, the like of whose good deeds I would rather see Allah with, than yours. I swear that Allah will put you with your two friends who have gone before you. Many times I heard the Prophet say, "I and Abū Bakr and 'Umar came," "I and Abū Bakr and 'Umar went out." I do hope and believe that Allah will place you with those two.'"[643]

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[641] Al-Bukhārī, 3668; but, again, it was not recorded by Muslim.

[642] Al-Bukhārī, 3671; Abū Dāwūd, 4629; Ibn Abī Shaybah, 12:12; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1204, 1206; Al-Baghawī, 3871.

[643] Al-Bukhārī, 3677, 3685; Muslim, 2389; Ibn Mājah, 98; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1210; Al-

I have already mentioned the *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) saw in a dream that he drew water from a well, and then Abū Bakr drew, and then 'Umar drew, until people had drunk to their fill.[644] In the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*, we have another *ḥadīth* reported by Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭab sought permission and went to the Prophet (peace be on him). There were some women from the Quraysh talking to him quite loudly. At the end of the *ḥadīth*, it states that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Leave them, Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb! By the One Who has my life in His hands, if Satan finds you walking on one side of the road, he will walk on the other side."[645] It is also in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that the Prophet (peace be on him) used to say, "There were people in earlier communities who were *muḥaddathūn*. Were there such a man in our community it would be 'Umar."[646] Ibn Wahab says that *muḥaddath* means one who receives inspiration (*mulham*).

(102) The third heir to the *khilāfah* was 'Uthmān, may Allah be pleased with him.

This means that after 'Umar, the next heir to the *khilāfah* was 'Uthmān, may Allah be pleased with them both. In his *Ṣaḥīḥ* Al-Bukhārī has mentioned, on the authority of 'Amr Ibn Maymūn, the story of the murder of 'Umar, the meeting of the electoral council (*shūrā*) and the pledge of fealty to 'Uthmān. I will quote it in full.

'Amr said, "I saw 'Umar (Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb), may Allah be pleased with him, a few days before he was assaulted. He had gone to Ḥudhayfah Ibn Al-Yamān and 'Uthmān Ibn Ḥunayf and asked, 'How did you do? Did you levy on the land more than it could bear?' They said, 'We levied on it what it could bear. There is not much revenue (to get from) there.' He said, 'You must refrain from levying on the land more than it can bear.' They assured him that they had not done that. 'Umar said, 'If Allah gives me life, I will leave for the widows of Iraq so much that they will not need anyone after me.'

Baghawī, 3891; Aḥmad, 1:112.

[644]Discussed earlier; it is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

[645]Al-Bukhārī, 3294, 3683, 6085; Muslim, 2396; Aḥmad, 1:171, 182, 187; Al-Baghawī, 3874; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1253, 1254; Ibn Abī Shaybah, 14:30.

[646]Al-Bukhārī, 3469, 3689; Muslim, 2398, 2399; At-Tirmidhī, 3693; Aḥmad, 2:339, 6:55; Ibn Abī Shaybah, 12:22; Al-Ḥumaydī, 1253; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:86.

"From that time, hardly four months had passed before 'Umar was assassinated. On the morning he was assaulted, I was standing behind him (in prayer). There was only 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās between me and him. His practice was that when he passed by the people arrayed in rows he would ask them to straighten the rows and fill the gaps if there were any. When he was satisfied that people were lined up properly, he would step forward and begin the prayer saying, 'Allah is Great.' Often he would recite Sūrat Yūsuf or An-Naḥal in the first rak'ah so that more and more people could join the prayer before he said the *takbīr* for bowing. But that day I heard him say instead, 'Someone has killed me,' or 'some dog has bitten me.' An infidel had stabbed him. He had a double-edged knife in his hand and stabbed people right and left, some thirteen men, of whom seven died.

"A Believer who saw all this threw his cloak over the murderer. When he saw that he was caught, he killed himself. 'Umar took the hand of 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf and asked him to lead the prayer. Those who were close to him, like me, saw what I saw, but the people at a distance did not know anything except that they did not hear 'Umar's voice. They were saying, 'Subḥāna Allah, Subḥāna Allah.' 'Abdur-Raḥmān made the prayer short. When it was finished 'Umar asked Ibn 'Abbās to see who had stabbed him. Ibn 'Abbās went round and returned after a while and said, 'It was a slave of Al-Mughīrah's.' 'Umar asked, 'Was it an artisan?' Ibn 'Abbās said, 'Yes.' 'Umar said, 'May Allah destroy him. I had sanctioned him for something. Praise be to Allah that He did not decree my death at the hand of a Muslim. You and your father loved to have many infidels in Madinah.' In fact, 'Abbās had the greatest number of slaves in the city. Ibn 'Abbās said, 'If you like I will do away with them.' He meant that he might kill them. 'Umar said, 'You are wrong. Would you kill them after they have learned your language, prayed towards your *qiblah* and made your *ḥajj*?'

"'Umar was then taken to his house, and we went with him. People looked as if they had never been struck by a calamity before. Some said, 'Maybe he'll recover.' Others said, 'He might not survive.' Some palm tree juice (*nabidh*) was given to him but it came out his entrails. Then some milk was given, but it also came out. People were now convinced that he would not survive. We went in to see him. Others also went in, and eulogized and praised him. A young man came and said, 'Commander of the Faithful, you should be happy. Allah has bestowed upon you many a blessing. You were a close friend of the Prophet. You have a glorious record

in Islam that you know. Then you were appointed emir and ruled with justice. And finally you are dying as a martyr.'

"'Umar said, 'I wish my good deeds were equal to my evil ones, nothing against me or in my favor.' When the young man was going out, his gown rubbed the ground. 'Umar asked to have him called back. When he returned, 'Umar said, 'Nephew, raise your gown. It will stay clean, and it is better for obeying your Lord.' 'Umar then asked his son 'Abdullah how much money he had to pay debts. It was counted and came to be about 86,000. 'Umar said, 'If the property of the family suffices let the debts be paid off from it. But if it does not, then ask the Banū 'Adīy Ibn Ka'b. If even that does not suffice, ask the Quraysh, but do not go beyond them. Pay off these debts. Go to 'Ā'ishah, Mother of the Believers, and give her the greetings of 'Umar. Don't say, "Greetings from the Commander of the Faithful," for I am no more the Commander of the Faithful today. Say that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb seeks her permission to be buried along with his two friends.'

"'Abdullah went, sent his greetings to her, and sought her permission (to enter). When she assented, he went to her. She was sitting and weeping. He said, 'Umar gives you his greetings and seeks your permission to be buried along with his two friends. She said, 'I was keeping that place for myself, but I would prefer him over me and give it to him.' When 'Abdullah returned, 'Umar was told that he had come back. He asked the people around him to raise him up, and asked 'Abdullah, 'What have you to say? 'Abdullah said, 'She has given the permission the Commander of the Faithful wanted. He said, 'Praise be to Allah. There was nothing more important to me than this. When I am dead, take me there, give my greetings to her and say that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb seeks her permission. If she assents, put me in the grave there. But if she does not, put me in the graveyard of the Believers.'

"Then *Umm al-Mū'minīn* Ḥafṣah and other women came in. Seeing them we got up. She went in to 'Umar and wept there for some time. People began to seek permission to see him, so she went into an inner chamber. We heard her weeping from there. People said to 'Umar, 'Commander of the Faithful, make a will; appoint someone caliph. He said, 'I see none better for the position than this group of people with whom the Prophet (peace be on him) was well pleased.' Then he named 'Alī, 'Uthmān, Az-Zubayr, Talḥah, Sa'd and 'Abdur-Raḥmān, and said, ''Abdullah Ibn 'Umar will join their meeting without being a candidate for the *khilāfah*.' He said that to console 'Abdullah. 'If Sa'd is elected leader,' he continued, 'that will be correct; otherwise, whoever is elected leader should seek his

assistance. I did not remove him from his office because he was incompetent or because he embezzled any wealth.'

"He then said, 'My advice to the caliph after me is that he should recognize the rights of the Muhājirūn and safeguard their honor. He should be kind to the Anṣār, who had homes (in Madinah) and adopted the faith before them, and appreciate their good deeds, and ignore their evils. He should treat with kindness the people of all the countries who defend Islam, fill its treasury and fight against its enemies; he should take nothing from them except what is more than their needs, and that, too, with their consent. He should be good to the desert Arabs, who are the real Arabs and the fountainhead of Islam; he should take from them what is not dear to them and spend it on the poor among them. And he should take care of those who have sought the shelter of Allah and his Prophet, keep the pledge that has been given them, protect their lives and property, and tax them only to the extent they can afford.'

"When 'Umar died we took him out and brought him to 'Ā'ishah's place. 'Abdullah sent her his greetings and said that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭab was seeking her permission. She permitted them to enter and he was taken in and put in the grave beside his two friends.

"After the burial, the men whom 'Umar had named gathered together. 'Abdur-Raḥmān said, 'Let us limit the matter to three of us.' Az-Zubayr said, 'I give my right to 'Alī.' Talḥah said, 'I give my right to 'Uthmān,' and Sa'd said, 'I give my right to 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf.' 'Abdur-Raḥmān said to 'Alī and 'Uthmān, 'Whichever of you withdraws from this thing, we will entrust it to him. Let Allah and Islam be our witness.' However, both of them kept silent. 'Abdur-Raḥmān said, 'Would you leave the matter to me? Allah will punish me if I do not make every effort to select the better of you.' They agreed. Then 'Abdur-Raḥmān took the hand of one of them and said, 'You are related to the Prophet and you have a position of honor in Islam which is rightly yours. With Allah as witness, I ask you to promise that if I make you the leader you will do justice, and if I make 'Uthmān the leader you will listen to him and obey him.'

"He then turned to the other and said to him what he had said to the first. When he had taken the pledge from both of them, he told 'Uthmān to extend his hand and he pledged his fealty to him. Then

'Alī pledged his fealty to him, and the people present in the hall pledged their fealty to him."[647]

Ḥumayd Ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān narrated that Al-Miswar Ibn Makhramah said, "When the group to whom 'Umar had entrusted the matter gathered, 'Abdur-Raḥmān said to them, 'I do not want to be a candidate for this office. If you like I can select one of you.' Thereupon they entrusted the matter to him. When 'Abdur-Raḥmān was given the authority, the people began to look to him; no one looked to anyone else. People would come to him and apprise him of their opinion. He consulted with them for a number of nights. During the night before the morning we pledged our fealty to 'Uthmān, 'Abdur-Raḥmān came to my house late at night and knocked at the door. I came out. He said, 'Strange! You are sleeping! By Allah, I have not slept much these three nights. Go to Az-Zubayr and Sa'd and bring them to me.' I went and brought them to him. He talked with them and then asked me to call 'Alī. I called him. 'Abdur-Raḥmān talked with him until it was past midnight. 'Alī got up and went. He was expecting to be elected. 'Abdur-Raḥmān had some fears about 'Alī. He asked me to call 'Uthmān. I called him and he talked with him until the call for the dawn prayer was made.

"'Abdur-Raḥmān led the prayer. The people of the group gathered around the pulpit. He sent me to call all the Muhājirūn and Anṣār who were available. He also called the regiment commanders who had come to make the *ḥajj* under 'Umar. When all had assembled, 'Abdur-Raḥmān said, 'I witness that there is no god except Allah, and I witness that Muḥammad is His Messenger and servant. He then said, "'Alī, I have discussed the matter with the people. They are with 'Uthmān, so please do not have ill-feeling in your heart.' He then turned to 'Uthmān and said, 'I pledge fealty to you on the condition that you will follow the command of Allah, the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be on him) and the precedents of the two caliphs after him.' He then pledged fealty to 'Uthmān, and then all the Muhājirūn and Anṣār, and the regiment commanders and the Muslims pledged fealty to him."[648]

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[647]Al-Bukhārī, Faḍā'il Aṣḥāb an-Nabī, 3700, and a shorter account in *ḥadīth* 1392, 3052, 4888. See also Ibn Sa'd, *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubra* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1388/1968), vol. 3, pp. 337-342; Ibn Abī Shaybah, 14:574-578; Muslim, 567; Aḥmad, 1:15, 27-28; An-Nasā'ī, 2:43.

[648]Al-Bukhārī, 2707; 'Abdur-Razzāq Aṣ-Ṣan'ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 5:477.

Among the merits of 'Uthmān, one is that he was a son-in-law of the Prophet (peace be on him). He married two of his daughters, one after the death of the other.

In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim has recorded a *ḥadīth* reported by 'Ā'ishah that the Prophet (peace be on him) was lying on his bed and his legs were not covered. Abū Bakr took permission to enter and came in. The Prophet (peace be on him) continued lying in the same condition and talked with him. After a while 'Umar took permission to enter and came in. The Prophet (peace be on him) was still lying in the same condition and talked with him. Then 'Uthmān sought permission to enter. The Prophet (peace be on him) sat up and covered his legs. 'Uthmān entered and talked to him.

When he went out, 'Ā'ishah asked the Prophet (peace be on him), "How is it that Abū Bakr came in and you did not cover your legs, nor did you get ready to receive him. Then 'Umar entered and you did not move. But 'Uthmān came in and you sat up and put your clothes in order?" the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Should I not be bashful in front of one before whom the angels are bashful?"[649] It is also in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet (peace be on him) sent 'Uthmān to the people of Makkah (for negotiations). When he was delayed and the Prophet (peace be on him) feared for him, he took a pledge from his Companions under the tree. He extended his right hand and said, "This is the hand of 'Uthmān." Then he put it on the other hand and said, "This is the pledge for 'Uthmān."[650]

(103) The fourth heir to the *khilāfah* was 'Alī, may Allah be pleased with him.

We hold that after 'Uthmān, the next heir to the *khilāfah* was 'Alī. When 'Uthmān was killed and people pledged fealty to 'Alī, he became the rightful *imām* who must be obeyed. His government was a *khilāfah* on the pattern of a prophetic government, as the *ḥadīth* transmitted by Ṣafīnah shows, which was mentioned earlier. Its words are, "The *khilāfah* of the prophetic model will last for thirty years, then Allah will give his kingdom to whom He will." the *khilāfah* of Abū Bakr was for two years and three months; the *khilāfah* of 'Umar was for ten years and a half; the *khilāfah* of

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[649]Muslim, 2402; Aḥmad, 6:15, 62, 155, and 6:228; Al-Baghawī, 4899; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1284.

[650]Al-Bukhārī, 3698, 4066; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3709; Aḥmad, 2:101.

'Uthmān was for twelve years; the *khilāfah* of 'Alī was for four years and nine months; and the *khilāfah* of Al-Ḥassan was for six months. The first king among the Muslims was Mu'āwīyah, and he was the best of all the Muslim kings. Moreover, he became the rightful *imām* when Al-Ḥassan handed over the *khilāfah* to him. After the death of 'Alī, the people of Iraq pledged fealty to his son, Al-Ḥassan. But after six months Al-Ḥassan handed over the *khilāfah* to Mu'āwīyah, and the words of the Prophet (peace be on him) were fulfilled: "This (grand)son of mine is a leader. Allah will make peace through him between two large Muslim factions."[651] The story is fully narrated in various books and is well known.

'Alī became the caliph after 'Uthmān, when the Companions pledged fealty to him. Only the people of Syria sided with Mu'āwīyah. 'Alī was on the truth. When 'Uthmān was killed, many rumors and false allegations went round against 'Uthmān and against some prominent Companions, like 'Alī, Talḥah and Az-Zubayr. People in Syria, who were far from Madinah and had little knowledge of the events were confused, and the interested and ambitious among them tried to fish in troubled waters. On the other hand, those who loved 'Uthmān began to doubt the sincerity of some prominent people, against whom 'Uthmān constantly received news of various kinds - some pure lies, some distorted reports, and some that made no sense. There were also people who wanted power. Some of them were in the camp of 'Alī – they included the Khārijīs. They had rebelled against 'Uthmān and killed him, but they could not be identified. Some of them enjoyed the protection of their tribes; some could not be proved guilty; some had evil designs in their minds but did not get the opportunity to implement them. Talḥah and Az-Zubayr thought that if the blood of the innocent caliph was not avenged and the mischief-mongers were not punished, they would invite upon themselves Allah's wrath. This led to the Battle of the Camel. Although neither 'Alī nor Talḥah and Az-Zubayr wanted it, it was brought about by the mischief-mongers against the will of the Companions.

Then came the Battle of Ṣiffīn. The people of Syria thought that even though they were great in number they did not or could not have justice that would have united the *ummah*. They feared that the

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[651] Al-Bukhārī, 2704, 3746, 7109; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3775; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4662; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Jumu'ah*, 3:107; Aḥmad, 5:49; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:174; Al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwah*, 6:442, 443; Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilya*, 2:35.

people in the army (of 'Alī) might act against them just as they had acted against 'Uthmān. 'Alī was the rightful and the rightly-guided caliph whose command had to be carried out and around whom all the community had to rally. He thought that the Syrians would not submit to him, which they were supposed to do, unless he battled against them and forced them into submission. He felt that that was the only way open, and did not think that he should placate them as the Prophet (peace be on him) had done with some people in his time, and the two caliphs had done in their times. In his view, the law demanded that they be punished and prevented from causing further troubles rather than winning them over. Consequently he resorted to war.

But most of the elder Companions refrained from the war. They had those *aḥādīth* in mind which say that in times of trouble, one should stay at home. For them, the evils of war outweighed its good. We, on our part, have a good word for every group. We say, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who came before us into the faith, and leave not in our hearts rancor against those who have believed. Our Lord, You are indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful" [59:10]. Allah has saved our hands from taking part in these troubles; may He also save our tongues from saying anything wrong regarding it, out of His mercy.[652]

There are many *aḥādīth* that state the merits of 'Alī. The two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s have recorded from Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ that the Prophet (peace be on him) said to 'Alī, "You are to me like Aaron was to Moses, except that there is no prophet after me."[653] At the battle of Khaybar, the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Tomorrow I will give the banner to one who loves Allah and His Prophet and whom Allah and His Prophet love." Everyone began hoping for that honor. When the time came, the Prophet (peace be on him) called 'Alī, who had a pain in his eyes. The Prophet (peace be on him) put his saliva on his eyes and gave him the banner, and Allah gave them victory at his hand.[654]

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[652]On this point see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 35:70-74; Ibn Taymīyyah, *Minhaj as-Sunnah* (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Islamīyyah, n.d.), vol. 2, pp. 202-203, 219, 224.

[653]Al-Bukhārī, 3706, 4416; Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2404; At-Tirmidhī, 3764, 3731, 3732; Ibn Mājah, 115, 121; 'Abdur-Razzāq, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 20390; Al-Ḥumaydī, 71; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1331, 1332, 1333, 1334, 1335, 1341; Aḥmad, 1:170, 174-175, 177, 179, 182; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:108.

[654]Al-Bukhārī, 3009, 3701, 4210; Muslim, 2406; Aḥmad, 5:333; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 3906; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 5876, 5950, 5991.

When the verse, "Come, let us gather together our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves; then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie" [3:61], was revealed, the Prophet (peace be on him) collected 'Alī, Faṭimah, Ḥassan and Ḥussayn and said, "Lord, here is my family."[655]

(104) They are the right-principled caliphs and the rightly-guided *imāms*.

We have already referred to the *ḥadīth* which the compilers of the *Sunan* collections have recorded from Al-'Irbād Ibn Sarīyyah and which At-Tirmidhī has rated *ṣaḥīḥ*. Ibn Sarīyyah says that one day the Prophet (peace be on him) gave a very moving sermon. Tears ran down from the eyes and hearts trembled with fear. One of us said, "Messenger of Allah, this seems to be a farewell sermon! What is your advice for us?" He said, "I advise you to listen (to your leader) and to obey him. Those who live after me will see many changes. You must then follow my ways and the ways of the right-principled and rightly-guided caliphs who come after me. Abide by them and hold them fast.[656] Avoid innovations, for every newly invented, baseless idea or practice (*bid'ah*) will only lead you astray."[657]

The order of honor in which these caliphs stand is the same order in which they assumed power. However, Abū Bakr and 'Umar have a distinction in comparison with the other two. The Prophet (peace be on him) enjoined us to follow the ways (*sunnah*) of the right-principled caliphs, but he only asked us to imitate two of them, Abū Bakr and 'Umar. He said, "Imitate those who come after me, Abū Bakr and 'Umar."[658] There is a difference between following one's ways (*ittibā' sunnatihi*) and imitating him (*iqtida bihi*). Hence the status of Abū Bakr and 'Umar is higher than the status of 'Uthmān and 'Alī, may Allah be pleased with them all.

It has been reported that Abū Ḥanīfah considered 'Alī to be greater than 'Uthmān, but the commonly accepted view in his

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[655]Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2404; Aṭ-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3724; Aḥmad, 1:185; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:108-109.

[656]Literally, "Bite on it with your molars."

[657]Abū Dāwūd, 4607; At-Tirmidhī, 2678 with the remark that the *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*; Ibn Mājah, 42; Aḥmad, 4:126, 127; Ad-Dārimī, 1:44-45; Al-Ḥakīm, 1:95-96, 97, and Adh-Dhahabī has endorsed Al-Ḥakīm's evaluation of it being authentic.

[658]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

madhhab is that 'Uthmān was greater than 'Alī. This is also the view of the Ahl as-Sunnah in general. I have already mentioned the words that 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf spoke to 'Alī: "I discussed the matter with the people. They are with 'Uthmān." Ayyūb As-Sakhtayānī has said, "Those who do not consider 'Uthmān better than 'Alī insult the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār."

The two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded the words of Ibn 'Umar: "We used to say even when the Prophet (peace be on him) was alive that the best of his *ummah* after him was Abū Bakr then 'Umar and then 'Uthmān."[659]

(105) We believe that the ten Companions, those whom the Prophet (peace be on him) named and gave the glad tidings that they would go to Paradise, will go to Paradise, as he said, and what he said is true. Those Companions are: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Talḥah, Az-Zubayr, Sa'd, Sa'īd, 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf and Abū 'Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraḥ, "the trustee of this *ummah*". May Allah be pleased with them all.

We have mentioned some of the merits of the four caliphs. Regarding the other six, Muslim has recorded a *ḥadīth* that 'Ā'ishah said that one night the Prophet (peace be on him) could not sleep and said, "I wish a pious man from my Companions kept guard for me tonight." She then heard the rattling of weapons. The Prophet (peace be on him) asked, "Who is it?" Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ said, "Messenger of Allah, I have come to keep guard for you." In a variant of the *ḥadīth* the words are, "I feared for the Messenger of Allah and came to guard him." the Prophet (peace be on him) then prayed for him and slept.[660]

The *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded a *ḥadīth* that at the battle of Uḥud the Prophet (peace be on him) encouraged Sa'd to shoot his arrows with these words, "Shoot, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you."[661] The reference to the sacrifice

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[659]Al-Bukhārī, 3697; Abū Dāwūd, 4627, 4628; At-Tirmidhī, 3707; Aḥmad, 2:14; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 13131, 13132, 13281, 13301. Contrary to the view of the commentator, the *ḥadīth* is not found in Muslim.

[660]Muslim, 2410; Al-Bukhārī, 2885, 7231; At-Tirmidhī, 3757; Aḥmad, 6:141; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1411; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:501.

[661]Al-Bukhārī, 2905, 4058, 4059, 6184; Muslim, 2411; At-Tirmidhī, 3756; Ibn Mājah, 129; Aḥmad, 1:92.

of both the parents by the Prophet (peace be on him) was a rare honor granted to Sa'd.

Muslim mentioned in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that Qays Ibn Abī Ḥāzim said that he had seen the hands of Talḥah by which he shielded the Prophet at the battle of Uḥud; they had been crippled.[662] Muslim has also mentioned that Abū 'Uthmān Al-Nahdī said that at one point during that battle there was no one with the Prophet (peace be on him) except Talḥah and Sa'd.[663] The two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s record from Jābir Ibn 'Abdullah that at the battle of the Ditch the Prophet (peace be on him) gave a call and Az-Zubayr responded. The Prophet (peace be on him) called a second time, and Az-Zubayr responded again, whereupon the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Every prophet has a helper (ḥawārī); my helper is Az-Zubayr."[664] This version of the *ḥadīth* occurs in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s also have the *ḥadīth* narrated by Az-Zubayr that the Prophet (peace be on him) asked who would go to the Banū Qurayẓah and report to him on their activities. Az-Zubayr says that he went to them and returned with the information the Prophet (peace be on him) wanted. The Prophet (peace be on him) prayed for him and said, "My father and mother be sacrificed for you."[665]

In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim recorded on the authority of Anas Ibn Mālik that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Every *ummah* has a trustworthy one (*amīn*) and our trustworthy one, people, is Abū 'Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarraḥ."[666] the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s record the *ḥadīth* reported by Ḥudhayfah Ibn Al-Yamān that the people of Najran came to the Prophet (peace be on him) and said, "Messenger of Allah, send us a trustworthy person." He said, "Certainly I will send you a truly trustworthy person." Then everyone raised his head and looked to him. He selected Abū 'Ubaydah and sent him.[667]

Sa'īd Ibn Zayd testified that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Ten people will go to Paradise. The Prophet will go to Paradise;

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[662]Al-Bukhārī, 3724, 4063; Ibn Mājah, 178; Aḥmad, 1:161. Contrary to the view of the commentator, the *ḥadīth* does not occur in Muslim.

[663]Al-Bukhārī, 3724, 4060; Muslim, 2414.

[664]Al-Bukhārī, 2846, 2847, 2997, 3719, 4113, 7261; Muslim, 2415; At-Tirmidhī, 3745; Ibn Mājah, 122; Aḥmad, 3:307, 314, 338, 365.

[665]Al-Bukhārī, 3720; Muslim, 2416; At-Tirmidhī, 3743; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1390.

[666]Al-Bukhārī, 3744, 4380, 4381, 7255; Muslim, 2419, At-Tirmidhī, 3790, 3791; Aḥmad, 3:125, 133, 146, 175, 189, 212, 245, 281, 286; Ibn Abī Shaybah, 12:135.

[667]Al-Bukhārī, 3745, 4380, 4381, 7254; Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2420; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3759; Aḥmad, 5:385, 401; Ibn Mājah, 125; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 3929.

Abū Bakr will go to Paradise; 'Umar will go to Paradise; 'Uthmān will go to Paradise; 'Alī will go to Paradise; Talḥah will go to Paradise; Az-Zubayr will go to Paradise; Sa'd Ibn Mālik will go to Paradise; and 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf will go to Paradise." Sa'īd said should people ask him he would name the tenth. They asked and he answered, "Sa'īd Ibn Zayd," and added, "The participation of any of these men once in a campaign with the Prophet (peace be on him) which raised dust to his face is better than a whole lifetime of your work, even if you lived as long as Noah."

This *ḥadīth* has been recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and At-Tirmidhī who has rated it as ṣaḥīḥ.[668] At-Tirmidhī has also recorded the *ḥadīth* reported by 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Abū Bakr will go to Paradise; 'Umar will go to Paradise; 'Alī will go to Paradise; 'Uthmān will go to Paradise; Talḥah will go to Paradise; Az-Zubayr Ibn Al-'Awwām will go to Paradise; 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf will go to Paradise; Sa'īd Ibn Zayd Ibn Nawfal will go to Paradise and Abū 'Ubaydah Ibn Al-Jarrāḥ will go to Paradise."[669] This *ḥadīth* has also been recorded by Imām Aḥmad in his *Musnad*. The *ḥadīth* which Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Khaythamah has recorded has the name of 'Uthmān before the name of 'Alī, may Allah be pleased with them both.

Abū Hurayrah narrated that once the Prophet (peace be on him) was at Mount Hirā'. With him was Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Talḥah and Az-Zubayr. The rock on which they were sitting shook. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Be still. There is no one on you except a prophet, a *ṣiddiq* (sincere one) or a *shahid* (martyr)."[670] Muslim and At-Tirmidhī have recorded this *ḥadīth* and noted a number of channels through which it has been transmitted.

The Ahl as-Sunnah honor these ten Companions and believe that they are greater than the others. Their achievements and merits are very well-known. Some ignorant people avoid saying "ten" and doing things that are ten, since they hate the ten most eminent Companions who were promised Paradise. They make an exception only for 'Alī. It is strange, however, that they hate the number ten

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[668]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4649, 4650; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3748, 3757; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 134; Aḥmad, 1:1 Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 4:440. It is authentic.

[669]At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3748; Aḥmad, 1:193; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 3925. The *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[670]Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2417; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3698; Aḥmad, 2:419; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 3924; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1441, 1442.

and love the number nine, while they hate nine out of the ten. They dislike all the first Muhājirūn and the Anṣār who pledged fealty to the Prophet (peace be on him) under the tree and who were one thousand and four hundred.[671] Allah was well pleased with them as He said, "Allah's good pleasure was on the Believers when they swore fealty to you under the tree" [48:18]. Muslim, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and others record from Jābir that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "None of those who pledged fealty under the tree will enter the Fire."[672] Muslim has also the *ḥadīth* reported by Jābir that Ḥatib Ibn Abī Balta'ah's slave asked the Prophet (peace be on him) whether Ḥatib would enter the Fire. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "No, he will not, for he participated in the Battle of Badr and the campaign of Ḥudaybīyyah."[673]

The Rafiḍah, however, disown the majority of these Companions. In fact, they disown all the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) except a small number of them, about thirteen to nineteen persons. Suppose they were the ten most wicked persons in the world; would anyone refrain from using the term ten? Allah has said, "There were in the city nine men of a family who made mischief in the land, and would not refrain" [29:48]. Should one then avoid using the number nine? On the other hand, Allah has mentioned with approval the number ten in various contexts in the Qur'ān, for example, "There are ten (days) in all" [2:196]; "We appointed for Moses thirty nights, and completed (the period) with ten (more)" [7:142]; and "By the break of day, and by ten nights" [89:1-2]. The *ḥadīth* also mentions the number ten in different contexts, for example, "The Prophet used to sit in *i'tikāf* during the last ten days of Ramaḍān;"[674] "Seek it (the Night of *Qadr*) in the last

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[671]Different estimates have been made. According to one report the number of the Companions present at Hudaybīyyah was 1,500 (see Al-Bukhārī, 4152, Muslim, 1856, 72, 73); according to another, there were 1,400 (see Al-Bukhārī, 4154, 4840, 4150 and 4153; Muslim, 1856, 1858). According to a third report, there were 1,300 (see Al-Bukhārī, 4155; Muslim, 1~57); and according to a fourth report over 1,400 (see Al-Bukhārī, 4151). For a discussion see Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 7:341; Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, vol. 3, pp. 287-288.

[672]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

[673]Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2195; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3863; Aḥmad, 3:325, 349; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 3064; Ibn Abī Shaybah, 12:155; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 3:301.

[674]Al-Bukhārī, 2025, 2026, 2044, 4998; Muslim, 1171, 1172; Abū Dāwūd, 2462, 4263, 2466; At-Tirmidhī, 790, 803; Ibn Mājah, 1769, 1770; Aḥmad, 2:281, 336, 355, 40l, 5:141, 6:50, 92, 168, 169, 232, 279.

ten nights of Ramaḍān;"[675] and, "There is no other day wherein your deeds are more dear to Allah than the ten days (of Dhu al-Ḥijjah)."[676]

In lieu of these ten Companions, the Rafiḍah extoll their twelve *imāms*. The first was 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, about whom they make the baseless claim that he was the heir (*wasī*) of the Prophet (peace be on him). The second was Al-Ḥassan, the third was Al-Ḥussayn, may Allah be pleased with both of them. The fourth was 'Alī Ibn Al-Ḥussayn Zayn Al-'Abidīn, the fifth was Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Al-Bāqir, the sixth was Ja'far Ibn Muḥammad Aṣ-Ṣādiq, the seventh was Mūsā Ibn Ja'far Al-Kāẓim, the eighth was 'Alī Ibn Mūsā Ar-Riḍa, the ninth was Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Al-Jawwād, the tenth was 'Alī Ibn Muḥammad Ar-Riḍa, the eleventh was Al-Ḥussayn Ibn 'Alī Al-'Askarī, and finally, Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥassan. They love these *imāms* to excess, going well beyond any acceptable limit.

However, there is nothing in the *ḥadīth* about them, and what there is goes against their beliefs about these people, for example, the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s have a *ḥadīth* narrated by Jābir Ibn Samrah that he went with his father to the Prophet (peace be on him) who said, "The affairs of the people will continue to be good as long as they are ruled by twelve people," and then he said something which Jābir could not hear. So he asked his father about it. His father said that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "All of them will be from the Quraysh." In another version of the *ḥadīth* the words are, "Islam will continue to be a dominant power until the twelfth caliph."

In a third version the words are, "This thing will remain dominant until the twelfth caliph."[677] And it was as the Prophet (peace be on him) said. The twelve caliphs were: the four rightly-guided caliphs, Mu'āwīyah, his son Yazīd, 'Abdul-Mālik Ibn Marwān, his four sons and 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-'Azīz between them. After them the caliphate began to decline. Contrary to this, the Rafiḍah believe that during this period the affairs of the *ummah* were in complete disorder, that the men in authority were unjust and corrupt, rather hypocrites and infidels, and that the "people of truth" (*ahl al-ḥaqq*) were more despised and oppressed than the Jews.

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[675] Al-Bukhārī, 2017, 2019, 2020; Muslim, 1169; At-Tirmidhī, 792; Aḥmad, 2:291, 519, 6:50, 56, 77, 204.

[676] Al-Bukhārī, 969; At-Tirmidhī, 757; Abū Dāwūd, 2638; Ibn Mājah, 1727; Aḥmad, 1:224, 338; Ibn Ḥibban, 324; Ad-Dārimī, 2:25.

[677] Al-Bukhārī, 7222, 7223; Muslim, 1821; At-Tirmidhī, 2224; Aḥmad, 5:86, 87, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 106, 107, 108.

They are absolutely wrong; on the contrary, Islam continued to expand and grow under those twelve caliphs.

(106) Whoever speaks well of the Prophet's Companions, his pure and pious wives - free from any impurity - and his noble and righteous descendants - free from any impurity - is free from hypocrisy.

I have already mentioned some *aḥādīth* stating the merits of the Prophet's Companions. Here is another, which Muslim has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Zayd Ibn Arqām says that once the Prophet (peace be on him) gave a sermon at a place between Makkah and Madinah called Khumm. He praised Allah and then said, "People! Know that I am simply a man. Allah's messenger (the angel of death) may soon come, and I will submit. I am leaving with you two heavy burdens. One is the Book of Allah, which is guidance and light. Hold fast to it and act upon it." He then discussed the subject at length and exhorted people to follow the Qur'ān sincerely. "The second thing," he said, "is my family (*ahl-baytī*). I ask you to fear Allah with regard to my family." He repeated these words three times.[678]

Al-Bukhārī has mentioned another tradition that Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq said, "Mind Muḥammad's words about his family."[679]

The reason the author has put above hypocrisy those who honor the Prophet's Companions, his wives and descendants is that *rafḍ*, or the creed of the Rafiḍah was expounded first by a hypocrite and heretic. He wanted to destroy Islam and denigrate the Prophet (peace be on him), as is stated by a number of scholars. This was 'Abdullah Ibn Saba'.[680] When he announced his Islam he intended

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[678]Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2408; Aḥmad, 4:366; Ad-Dārimī, 2:431-432; Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *Mushkil al-Āthār*, 4:368; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1550; Al-Ḥakīm, 3:109, 148, 533.

[679]Al-Bukhārī, 3713, 3751.

[680]Abdullah Ibn Saba (d. ca. 40/660), the leader of an extremist Shī'ī sect, As-Sabi'ah, was from Yemen. He was first a Jew, then embraced Islam, only to undermine it. He moved from one place to another and instigated people against Islam and its leaders. Starting from Ḥijāz, he went to Baṣrah and Kūfah, then to Damascus. He tried to arouse people against the third caliph, 'Uthmān, but could not succeed and was driven out to Egypt. He preached that Muḥammad would return like Jesus, that every prophet has a legatee (*waṣī*) and that 'Alī was the waṣī of Muḥammad and the last of the legatees, that 'Alī is alive and living up in the clouds, that the souls transmigrate from one body to another after death. Ibn 'Asākir *Tārīkh Dimashq*, 7:41; Adh-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-'Itidāl*, vol. 2, p. 426; Al-Ash'arī , Maqālāt al-Islāmīyyīn, p. 15;

to undermine Islam through his evil designs, just as Paul had done with Christianity. Ibn Saba' first posed as a pious devotee, engaged in enjoining good and forbidding evil. He then began to incite people against 'Uthmān and worked for his murder. When 'Alī went to Kufah, he deified him and rallied people round him so that he might achieve his evil designs. When 'Alī came to know this, he ordered Ibn Saba' killed. But Ibn Saba' left the place and fled to Qargis. His story is well known in the history books.

We have stated earlier that 'Alī chastised those who exalted him over Abū Bakr and 'Umar, and gave them the same punishment which is inflicted on a slanderer. But the heresies of the Khawārij, or the Ḥarurīyyah, and the Shī'ah continued to be echoed by the mischief-mongers. This explains how rafḍ is the gateway to the undoing of Islam. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn Aṭ-Ṭayyib has discussed at length the Bāṭinīyyah and their designs to undermine Islam. He says, "Their missionaries first persuade a Muslim to accept the beliefs and practices of the Shī'ah. When he accepts them they tell him that the Elders (Salaf) did an injustice to 'Alī and killed Al-Ḥussayn. Then they ask him to repudiate the Banū Taym, Banū 'Adīy, Banū Umayyah and Banū 'Abbās, and to believe that 'Alī will come back, that he has knowledge of the Unseen, that Allah entrusted to him the creation of the world, and so on and so on - all the foolish ideas of the Shī'ah. When they see that he responds to their call and feels for the injustices and cruelties that 'Alī and his sons had to suffer, they think they have achieved their goal."

In fact, these people begin by maligning the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him), then they malign his wives and then even the Prophet himself, for in the view of these mistaken people, the family of the Prophet went no less astray than his Companions.

(107) The scholars of the Elders and their successors, whether they are *ḥadīth* and tradition scholars or scholars of *fiqh* and rational sciences, should not be mentioned except in good terms. Whoever speaks ill of them is not on the right path.

Allah has said, "If anyone contends with the Messenger, even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him and follows a path other than that of the men of faith, We will leave him on the path he

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Ash-Shahristānī, *Al-Milal wa an-Niḥal*, (ed. Muḥammad Sā'id Kilānī; Cairo: Maktabah Muṣṭafā Al-Bābī Al-Ḥalabī, 1396/1976), vol. 6, p. 174.

has chosen and land him in Hell – and what an evil refuge" [4:115]. This means that the duty of a Muslim is not only to be loyal to Allah and His Prophet but also to be loyal to the Muslim community, as the Qur'ān has stated, particularly those who are the heirs of the Prophet, whom Allah has made like stars for the guidance of the people in darkness over sea and land, and in whose knowledge and piety the community has complete faith.[681] For every community before Muḥammad (peace be on him, to which a prophet) was sent, their scholars were the worst of them, but as for the Muslim *ummah*, the scholars are the best of them. They represent the Prophet (peace be on him) in his *ummah*, and revive his ways that are forgotten. The Book of Allah supports them and they support it, it extols them and they extol it.

There is complete agreement among the scholars of this *ummah* that the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be on him) must be followed. Hence, if anyone has said anything that conflicts with a *ḥadīth* there may be one of the following three acceptable excuses for him not to act upon it: one, he may have doubts whether the *ḥadīth* is authentic; second, he may not be sure whether the *ḥadīth* applies to the case in which he has given his opinion; and third, he may be of the view that the *ḥadīth* has been abrogated.

The *'ulamā'* have a place of honor among us, for they tell us what the Prophet (peace be on him) taught, and explain to us what we cannot understand by ourselves. May Allah be pleased with them and make them pleased. "Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who came before us into the faith, and leave not in our hearts rancor against those who have believed. Our Lord, You are indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful" [59:10].

(108) We do not exalt any friend (*wālī*) of Allah over any one of His prophets, peace and blessings be upon them. On the contrary, we believe that a single prophet (*nabī*) is greater than all the walis combined.

The author is refuting here the view of the monists and the ignorant Ṣūfīs.[682] The well-grounded people follow the revelation and observe the law. Allah has enjoined upon everyone to follow the Prophet (peace be on him). He has said, "We sent not any

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[681]For a discussion of this point, cf. Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 20:231-233.

[682]For Ibn Taymīyyah's discussion on this point, see *Jāmi' ar-Rasā'il*, vol. I, pp. 205-7; *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 2:219-247; 11:225-229; *Dar' Ta'arud al-'Aql wa an-Naql*, 5:4.

messenger but to be obeyed in accordance with the will of Allah. If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto you and asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Oft-Returning Most Merciful. But no, by your Lord, they can have no (real) faith, until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in their hearts no resistance against your decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction" [4:64-65]. He has also said, "Say: If you do love Allah follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving and Merciful" [3:31].

Abū 'Uthmān Al-Nishapūrī has said, "Whoever is governed by the Sunnah in his words and deeds speaks wisdom, but whoever is guided by his fancies and lusts speaks *bid'ah*." Another Ṣūfī has said, "When a Ṣūfī ignores a *sunnah* he does so out of conceit." This is true, for if he does not follow the teachings of the Prophet (peace be on him), he is simply pursuing his own whims and ignoring the guidance of Allah. This is conceit and arrogance. It is acting like those who are referred to in the verse, "They say: 'We will not believe until we receive (exactly) like what is received by Allah's messengers.' Allah knows best whom to entrust his mission" [6:124].

Many of these people think they can attain what the prophets attained through their own means, through intensive devotion and purification of the soul, without following the ways of the prophets. Some have claimed that they are better than the prophets. One has even said that the prophets and messengers received their knowledge of Allah from the niche or lamp of the Seal of the Saints, and that he is that seal. This "truth" which he claims for himself is no different from what Pharaoh said, namely that the world exists out there by itself, and that there is no separate independent creator.

In fact, this man says that he is Allah. To be sure, Pharaoh denied Allah apparently, but in the heart of his heart he believed in Allah, and believed in a way better than they do. He believed in an independent Creator while they believe that the world and the Creator are one. This is the belief of Ibn 'Arabī and Ṣūfis like him. However, when Ibn 'Arabī saw that he could not change the words of the *Shar'*, he began to say that though prophecy (*nubūwwah*) ended, sainthood (*walāyah*) has not. He further claimed that his sainthood is higher than any prophethood, higher than the status any prophet or messenger may attain, and that the prophets receive light

from his *walāyah*. His words are, "The status of a prophet is in between, above the messenger and below the saint (*walī*)."[683]

This is turning the *Shar'* upside down, for according to the Qur'ān, every righteous Believer is a *walī*. Allah has said, "Behold! Verily on the friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah there is no fear, nor will they grieve, those who believe and (constantly) guard against disobedience" [10:62-63]. Prophethood (*nubūwwah*) is therefore higher than *walāyah*, and messengerhood (*riṣālah*) is higher than prophethood, as we have explained previously.

In his Fuṣūṣ, Ibn 'Arabī has written:

> The Prophet likened prophecy to a wall made of bricks which was all completed except for the place of one brick, and he said that he was that brick. However, the Prophet did not see the (whole) wall; that is why he said one brick. But the Seal of the Saints must see (the whole wall). He must see what the Prophet has described, and (also) see himself in the wall in place of two bricks, see himself filling the place of the two bricks and thus completing the wall. The reason he sees the place of two bricks is that the wall is formed of a silver brick and a golden brick. The silver brick is the outer side of the wall with all that it implies of rulings, for (the Prophet) receives from Allah laws in which he is externally obeyed. Since (the Seal of the Saints) sees things as they are, he must see this thing also in the way (I have described). That is to say, he is at the place of the golden brick on the inner side, for he receives from the same source from where the angel receives who reveals to the Messenger. If you understand what we have hinted at, you will have knowledge that is useful.[684]

Who is a greater infidel than one who likens himself to a golden brick and likens the Messenger to a silver brick, and exalts himself over and above the messengers? These are mere fancies of these people. In the words of the Qur'ān, "There is nothing in their breasts but (the quest of) greatness which they will never attain" [40:56]. The infidelity (*kufr*) of this man who says such things is obvious. There are many more statements of this kind in his writings. In some, his *kufr* is very explicit; in others, it is implicit. His statements are to be studied carefully so that his erroneous ideas

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[683]See Ibn 'Arabī, *Al-Futuḥat al-Makkīyyah*, 2:252. See also Ibn Taymīyyah, *Dar' Ta'aruḍ al-'Aql wa an-Naql*, 10:204 and Jami' ar-Rasā'il, 1:209.

[684]See Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, (ed. Abū al-'Alā 'Afīfī; Cairo: Dār Iḥyā Al-Kutub Al-'Arabīyyah, 'Isā Al-Ḥalabī, 1365/1946), vol. I, p. 63.

may be exposed. Some of his ideas are stated clearly and everyone can see that they are wrong. In the case of others, one has to have a very sharp intellect to see and detect the error. The *kufr* of Ibn 'Arabī and men like him is more repulsive than the *kufr* of those who say, "We will not believe until we receive (exactly) like what was received by Allah's messengers" [6:124].

Ibn 'Arabī and people like him are hypocrites (*munafiqūn*) and destroyers of Islam (*zanādiqah*); they believe in the identity of Allah and the world. They will be immersed deep in the lowest abyss of the Hell-fire. They are hypocrites because they present themselves as Muslims, and put on a show of Islam as the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (peace be on him) posed as Muslims while they were infidels at heart. The Prophet (peace be on him) treated them as Muslims on the basis of what they did openly. Had they revealed their inner infidelity, the Prophet (peace be on him) would have treated them as apostates. Opinions differ on whether the repentance of an apostate will or will not be accepted. The correct view is that it will not be accepted. This is the view of Abū Ḥanīfah, as reported by Mu'alla. And to Allah we look for guidance.

(109) We believe in the miracles (*karamāt*) that have proceeded from them and have been reported by reliable reporters.

The term *mu'jizah* is used for everything that is a violation of natural phenomena.[685] Earlier scholars used *karāmah* as a synonym, but later scholars differentiated between them. They used *mu'jizah* for the miracles of a prophet and *karāmah* (literally grace) for the miracles of a *walī*. The common element between the two is the violation of natural phenomena. Three things are the causes of excellence: knowledge, power, and self-sufficiency. In their absolute forms, they are to be predicated of Allah alone. He is the only One Who knows everything, can do anything and needs nothing. This is the reason He asked His Messenger not to claim any of these when He told them, "Say: I tell you not that with me are the treasures of Allah, nor do I know what is hidden, nor do I tell you I am an angel. I but follow what is revealed to me" [6:50]. These words were spoken by the last prophet and messenger of resolute purpose. They were also spoken by Noah, the first prophet

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[685]See for more on this point, Ibn Taymīyyah's discussion in *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, vol. 11, pp. 311-335.

of resolute purpose and the first messenger Allah sent to people on earth. Both disclaimed these things when people asked for them.

Allah has referred to knowledge of the Unseen in several verses, for example, "They ask you about the hour – when will be its appointed time" [79:42]. Concerning power: "They say: 'We will not believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth; or until you have a garden of date trees and vines and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst, carrying abundant water; or you cause the sky to fall in pieces as you say (will happen) against us; or you bring Allah and the angels before us, face to face; or you have a house adorned with gold; or you mount a ladder right into the skies. No, we will not even believe your ascending until you send down to us a book that we can read'" [17:90-93].

Sometimes people reproached the Prophet for his human needs. Allah has also mentioned this: "They say: 'What sort of a messenger is this who eats food and walks through the streets?'" [25:7]. He has asked His Messenger to tell them that he cannot have any of those things except what Allah gives him. He can know only what He reveals to him, dispense with only what He enables him to dispense with, or do only those wonders which He empowers him to do. If you think over these categories you will find that all miracles belong to one or the other of them.

A miracle may serve a purpose which Islam has commended, in which case its performance is right, either obligatory or commendable. But if it secures a thing which Islam has only permitted, it will be regarded as a worldly blessing for which one should thank Allah. If it produces something which is forbidden or undesirable, it will invite punishment or Allah's hatred. Bal'ām Ibn Bā'ūr was given signs, but he misused them and incurred Allah's wrath. Such things happen when the person concerned makes a wrong judgment, follows a view blindly, does not know things well, is swayed by some emotion, does not possess sufficient power, or is impelled by a need. In short, a miracle is either commendable, objectionable, or permissible. In the event it is permissible but produces something good it is a blessing; but if it does not, then it is like any useless thing.

Abū 'Alī Al-Jawzijānī[686] has said, "Follow the Shari'ah constantly and do not run after miracles. You may love miracles, but your Lord loves your perseverance in following the Shari'ah." Sheikh Shihāb ad-Dīn As-Suhrawardī wrote in his 'Awārif, "When the devotees of our times hear that the pious men and saints of

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[686]For the words quoted here see 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 2, p. 101.

earlier times worked numerous miracles, they also want to perform them and have that power. I wish they would suppress that desire and blame their deeds for which they are not given the miracles. If they knew this, they would not worry about it. They should know that sometimes Allah gives miracles to a sincere devotee so that he may increase in conviction, reduce his interest in worldly things, and suppress evil desires. Sincere devotees should strive to hold fast to the Shari'ah; this is the truest and the greatest miracle."[687] There is no doubt that the heart is often more effective than the body. If good, it will produce good effects; if evil, it will produce evil effects. This means that the effects produced by the heart may be pleasing to Allah and may be displeasing.

Jurists have discussed the question of retribution for killing someone by occult means. But these people peer into the working of the cosmic world and think that a miracle by itself is a thing of honor. They do not know that the real miracle is to constantly follow the Shari'ah, nor do they know that the most favored to Allah are those whom He has made to do what He loves, who obey Him and His Messenger, and who help His friends and do battle with His enemies. They are in truth the *wālīs* of Allah, about whom He has said, "Behold! Verily on the walis of Allah there is no fear, nor will they grieve" [10:62].

When Allah bestows on anyone a miracle or any other blessing, or tests him by inflicting on him something painful, it is neither honor nor dishonor from Allah. A miracle is an honor if you do it to fulfill Allah's will; but it is a dishonor when you do it to defy His will. Allah has Himself warned, "Now as for man, when his Lord tries him, giving him honor and gifts, he says (puffed up): 'My Lord has honored me.' But when He tries him, restricting his subsistence for him, then he says (in despair): 'My Lord has humiliated me!'" [89:15-16].

In short, with regard to miracles, people are of three kinds: those for whom miracles add to their honor; others to whom they expose to Allah's punishment; and the third category of people are those for whom miracles are just like any other good that is permissible, as we have said above.

Miracles, whether cognitive or active, vary according to the word of Allah, which is of two kinds, existential and religious.[688]

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[687]Shihābuddin As-Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Arabī, 1st ed. 1966), p. 33.

[688]See also Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 11:270-271, *Al-Furqān bayn Awliyā' Ar-Raḥmān wa bayn Awliyā' ash-Shayṭān*, p. 118f, and Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Shifā' al-'Alil*, p. 282.

The former is referred to in the famous prayer of the Prophet (peace be on him), "I take shelter in the irrevocable words of Allah which neither the pious nor the villain can resist,"[689] and in many verses of the Qur'ān, such as, "Verily when He intends a thing His command is 'Be,' and it is!" [36:82]; and, "The word of your Lord does find its fulfillment in truth and in justice. None can change his words" [6:115]. The whole cosmos is governed by these words, as are miracles.

The second kind of words are religious. They are the Qur'ān and the *Shar'* which He has given to His Messenger (peace be on him) and which consists of injunctions, prohibitions and information. Man's duty towards them is to know them, to act upon them, and to enjoin what Allah has enjoined; and his duty towards the existential words is to know them and to produce things according to them. The first words are regulative and creative, the second prescriptive and religious. To know the first is to know the natural phenomena, and to know the second is to know religious injunctions. To have power over the first is to overcome natural processes, whether they pertain to oneself, as when one walks on water flies through the air, or sits in fire, or they pertain to others, as when one cures the disease of anybody, kills him, or makes him rich or poor. To have power over the second is, first, to submit to the commands of Allah and His Messenger (peace be on him) and follow the Qur'ān and Sunnah, externally and internally, and, then, to ask others to submit to Allah and His Messenger.

Now that this point is clear, let me further state that if a Muslim works no miracles, cognitive or active, it will not harm his piety. If he does not know anything hidden or effect anything extraordinary in the outer world, it will not affect his position with Allah. It may even be to his advantage sometimes, for a miracle raises one in honor only when he uses it for a religious purpose, otherwise it may be a liability; it may even expose him to punishment in this life or the Hereafter. Some miracles promote religion and some destroy it. They promote religion when they are governed by it, just as power and money promote religion when they are controlled by the *Shar'*. The best example that has ever been set for the use of political power and money is that of the Prophet (peace be on him) and then of his successors, Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Whoever considers miracles to be ends in themselves and uses religion as a means is like one who uses religion to earn money. He does not practice religion because he fears Hell or loves Paradise, which is what is required of him

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[689]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

according to the *Shar'*. A number of people boast that they have risen above the fear of Hell or the love of Paradise, but oddly enough, the highest object of their religion is to work some petty wonders in the world.

To be sure, when one is perfect in faith and practice, one gets miracles when one needs them. Allah has clearly stated that, for example, "For him who fears Allah and obeys His commands, He prepares a way out, and He provides for him from (sources) he could never imagine" [65:2-3]; "If you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion (to judge between right and wrong)" [8:29]; "If they had done what they were (actually) told, it would have been best for them, and would have gone furthest to strengthen their (faith). And We should then have given them from Our Presence a great reward, and We should have shown them the Straight Way" [4:66-68]; and, "Behold! Verily on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor will they grieve; those who believe and constantly guard themselves against evil – for them are glad tidings in the life of the present and in the Hereafter" [10:62-64]. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Beware of the insight of the Believer; he sees with the light of Allah," and then he recited the Qur'ānic verse, "Behold! In this there are portents for those who read the signs" [15:75].

At-Tirmidhī has recorded this *ḥadīth* from Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī.[690] The Prophet (peace be on him) narrated Allah's words, "Whoever opposes a friend of Mine declares war against Me. The closest My servant comes to Me is by doing the duties I have imposed on him. And My servant comes closer and closer to Me through supererogatory deeds until I love him; and when I love him I become his ears with which he hears, his eyes with which he sees, his hands with which he strikes, and his legs with which he walks. When he asks something of Me I give him; and when he seeks My protection I protect him. I do not hesitate in doing anything I want to do except when I take out the soul of a believing servant of Mine. He does not like to die, and I do not like to displease him, but there is no alternative."[691] In short, Allah loves perseverance in obedience, but the soul loves marvels. And Allah is the Guide.

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[690]At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr*, 3127; Ibn Jarīr, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 14:30. But one of the transmitters of the *ḥadīth*, 'Aṭi'ah Al- 'Awfī is a poor transmitter. Aṭ-Ṭabarānī has recorded the *ḥadīth* through a different channel (see *Al-Kabīr*, 7497) but its narrator, 'Abdullah Ibn Ṣāliḥ, is weak in memory. Nevertheless, Al-Haythamī has held the *ḥadīth* to be *ḥasan* (see his *Majmū' al-Fawā'id*, 10:268). See also Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 2:555. Al-Albānī has, on the other hand, shown the *ḥadīth* to be weak.

[691]Discussed earlier; it is an authentic *ḥadīth* without the statement, "but there is no

The Mu'tazilah deny the miracles of the pious. This is absolutely wrong and contradicts observed facts. They say that if we admit them it will be difficult for people to distinguish them from the miracles of the prophets, and, consequently, to differentiate between a saint and a prophet – a consequence they say that must be avoided. This argument is not correct, for the difficulty arises only when a saint works miracles and claims to be a prophet, but not when he does not claim that. And if he claims to be a prophet, he is not a saint but a liar and an imposter. We have earlier discussed the difference between a real prophet and an imposter who claims to be a prophet, when commenting on the author's words, "Muḥammad is a servant of Allah and His chosen prophet."

I would like to elaborate more on the concept of insight (*firāsah*). We have three kinds of insight in people.[692] One is the insight of faith (*firāsah īmānīyyah*), which is produced by a light that Allah casts into the heart of His obedient servant. It is, in fact, an idea that occupies the heart and overwhelms it, as a lion overcomes its *farīsah* (prey). It is from here that we get the word *firāsah*. This insight varies according to the power of faith: the stronger the faith, the sharper the insight. Abū Sulaymān Ad-Daranī said, "*Firāsah* is an intuitive perception on the part of the soul, a vision of the hidden. It is one of the stages of faith."

The second is an acquired insight (*firāsah riyāḍīyyah*). It is acquired through hunger, vigilance and solitude. When the soul is freed from various encumbrances, it acquires insight and illumination depending upon its degree of emancipation. This insight is available to a Believer as well as to a non-believer; it is neither a sign of faith, nor a proof of sanctity. It does not reveal the truth that saves or the path that leads to salvation. It belongs to the same category to which the insights of rulers, statesmen, doctors and others belong.

The third insight is physiognomic (*firāsah khalqīyyah*). Physicians and scientists have written about this topic. From the physical features of a person one infers some of his moral traits, since Allah has related the two in some relation. It has been observed, for example, that a person with an unusually small head has a weak intellect. It has also been noted that a broad chest indicates large-heartedness, and a narrow chest indicates meanness, as small and dull eyes signify a weak mind and a cold heart.

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alternative."

[692]See the discussion by Ibn Al-Qayyīm in *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 2, pp. 484-487.

(110) We believe in the signs of the Hour, such as the emergence of the Great Liar (*ad-Dajjāl*), the descent of Jesus son of Mary from Heaven, and we believe in the rising of the sun from the west, and the appearance of the Beast of the Earth from its place.

'Awf Ibn Mālik Al-Ashjā'ī said that he met the Prophet (peace be on him) at Tabūk while he was resting in a tent. The Prophet (peace be on him) said to him, "Count six things that will appear before the Hour: my death; then the conquest of Al-Quds; then two deaths that will take as many lives as the disease of the chest kills sheep; then an increase in affluence so great that one will not feel happy even if one is given a hundred dinars; then wars that will enter all the houses of the Arabs; then peace between you and the Banū Al-Asfar (Romans), who will break the treaty and attack you with eighty regiments, with twelve thousand soldiers in each regiment."[693] This *ḥadīth* has been recorded by Al-Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah and Aṭ-Ṭabarānī.

Ḥudhayfah Ibn Asid says that once they were talking about the Hour, when the Prophet (peace be on him) came and asked, "What are you talking about?" They said, "We are talking about the Hour." He said, "The Hour will not come before ten things come to pass: the Smoke, the Great Liar (*Dajjāl*), the Beast, the rising of the sun from the west, the descent of Jesus son of Mary from Heaven, Gog and Magog, three landslides, one in the east, one in the west and one in the Arabian peninsula, and finally, a fire that will appear in Yemen and drive people to their gathering place."[694] This *ḥadīth* has been recorded by Muslim.

Muslim and Al-Bukhārī have also recorded a *ḥadīth* in their *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections from Ibn 'Umar that when the Great Liar (*Dajjāl*) was mentioned in front of the Prophet (peace be on him), he said, "It will not be difficult for you to recognize him. Certainly Allah is not one-eyed. (Saying that, he pointed to one of his eyes.) But the Great Liar (*Dajjāl*) will be blind in the right eye, which will be like a squeezed grape."[695] This is the wording of Al-Bukhārī.

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[693] Al-Bukhārī, 3176; Abū Dāwūd, 4292, 4293; Ibn Mājah, 4042, 4095; Aḥmad, 6:25, 27; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 18:40, *ḥadīth* 70, 72, 98, 119, 122, 150.

[694] Muslim, *Al-Fitan*, 2901; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Malaḥīm*, 4311; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Fitān*, 2183; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 4055; Aḥmad, 4:6.

[695] Al-Bukhārī, 3439, 3441, 5902, 6999, 7026, 7128; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 169; Abū

Anas Ibn Mālik said that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Every prophet has warned his people against the one-eyed Great Liar (*Dajjāl*). Certainly, he will be one-eyed, but your Lord is not one-eyed. On his brow will be writ k-f-r,"[696] that is, he is a *kāfir* (infidel), as has been explained in another version of the *ḥadīth*.

Al-Bukhārī and others have recorded from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "By the One in Whose hand my life is, the son of Mary will come down to you as a judge, just and fair. He will demolish the cross, kill the swine, and abolish the *jizyah*. There will be such an abundance of wealth that no one will accept charity, and one prostration before Allah will be much more precious than all that the world has." After narrating the *ḥadīth*, Abū Hurayrah said, "Read, if you wish, the verse, 'And there is none of the People of the Book but must believe in him (Jesus) before his death; and on the Day of Judgment He will be a witness against them [4:159]."[697]

There are other *aḥādīth* also which say that Jesus son of Mary will descend from Heaven and kill the Great Liar (*Dajjāl*), whereupon Gog and Magog will appear and Allah will destroy them in one night at his request. But we cannot go into those details here.

As for the emergence of the Beast from the Earth and the rising of the sun in the west, Allah has said, "And when the word is fulfilled against them (the unjust), We will produce from the earth a Beast to speak to them, because mankind did not believe with assurance in Our revelations" [27:82]; and, "Are they waiting to see if the angels come to them, or your Lord! The day that certain of the signs of your Lord do come, no good will it do to a soul to believe in them then, if it believed not before, nor earned righteousness through its faith. Say: Wait, we too are waiting" [6:158]. In his exegesis of this verse Al-Bukhārī noted the *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Hurayrah in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The Hour will not come until the sun rises in the west. All those on earth that see it will believe, but by then it will not benefit any who had not believed before."[698]

Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4757; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Fitan*, 2235, 2241; Aḥmad, 2:37, 131; Ibn Abī Shaybah, 15:128; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 4255, 4256.

[696]Al-Bukhārī, 7131, 7408; Muslim, *Al-Fitan*, 2933; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Fitan*, 2245; Abū Dāwūd, 4316; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 1963.

[697]Al-Bukhārī, 2222, 2476, 3448, 3449; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 155; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Fitan*, 2233; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Malaḥīm*, 4324; Aḥmad, 2:240, 272, 290, 394, 406, 411, 482, 494, 538.

[698]Al-Bukhārī, 4635, 4636, 6506; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 157; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Malaḥīm*,

Muslim has recorded that 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr said that he remembered and will never forget the words of the Prophet (peace be on him) when he said, "The first of the signs to appear is the rising of the sun in the west and the appearance of the Beast in the forenoon. Whichever of these two happens, the other will follow on its heels."[699] The first of the signs means the first of those signs which are lesser known. The Great Liar (*Dajjāl*) will surely appear before that; similarly Jesus will come down from Heaven, and Gog and Magog will emerge before that. All these signs are known because they are related to man. The appearance of the Beast, on the other hand, is a strange phenomenon, and all the more strange because it will speak to people and point out who are faithful and who are not. This will be the first earthly sign that goes against natural phenomena. The rising of the sun in the west will be the first extraordinary sign.

There are a number of works on the signs of the Hour that may be consulted. We cannot go into further details in this short book.

(111) We do not believe in diviners and fortune-tellers, nor do we believe in those who expound ideas incompatible with the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the consensus of the *ummah*.

Muslim and Aḥmad have recorded in their collections that Ṣafiyyah bint Abī 'Ubayd heard from a wife of the Prophet (peace be on him) that he said, "Whoever goes to a fortune-teller (*'arrāf*) and inquires about anything, his prayers will not be accepted for forty nights."[700] Aḥmad has recorded another *ḥadīth* in his *Musnad*, which is reported by Abū Hurayrah, in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever inquires of a fortune-teller or a diviner (*kāhin*) and believes in what they say disbelieves in what has been revealed to Muḥammad."[701]

Some scholars include astrologers in the meaning of 'arrāf;[702] others say that they fall into the same category. If this is the situation of one who inquires, you can well imagine what will be the verdict against those who are inquired of. The two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī

4312; Ibn Mājah, 4068; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 4243.

[699]Muslim, *Al-Fitan*, 2941; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Malaḥīm*, 4310; Ibn Mājah, 4069; Aḥmad, 2:201; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 4243.

[700]Muslim, *As-Salām*, 2230; Aḥmad, 4:68, 5:380; Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilya*, 10:406-7.

[701]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

[702]See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 35:193-5.

and Muslim and the *Musnad* of Aḥmad also record the *ḥadīth* reported by 'Ā'ishah that when the Prophet (peace be on him) was asked about diviners he said, "They are nothing." People said, "Prophet of Allah, they sometimes say things that come true!" He said, "The jinns pilfer the truths and drop them into the ears of their devotees, and they mix with them over a hundred lies."[703]

It is also recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The price of a dog, the earnings of a prostitute, and the gift (*hulwān*) offered to a diviner are all evil."[704] *Hulwān* is commonly called (*ḥalāwah*) sweets. One may place in the same category a tip for the astrologer, or the fee of the fortune-teller who uses arrows marked with different letters, or small pebbles, or draws various lines in the sand. Different scholars such as Al-Baghawī, Qaḍī 'Āyaḍ, and others have reported a consensus of the scholars that these things are strictly forbidden.

In the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s there is a *ḥadīth* reported by Zayd Ibn Khālid that one morning at Hudaybīyyah the Prophet (peace be on him) gave a sermon. It had rained during the previous night. He said, "Do you know what your Lord said tonight?" the people said, "Allah and His Messenger know better." He said, "Allah has said, 'Some of my servants will believe in Me in the morning and some will deny Me. Those who say that the rain was a blessing from Allah will believe in Me and deny the stars, but those who say that it was caused by one or another star will deny Me and believe in the stars.'"[705] In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim and the *Musnad* of Aḥmad we have another *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Mālik Al-Ash'arī where the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Four things are remnants of the days of ignorance (*jāhilīyyah*) in my *ummah* which they will not give up: taking pride in one's descent, finding fault in the lineage of others, invoking stars for rain, and weeping loudly at death."[706]

There are many more sayings of the Prophet (peace be on him) and his Companions, as well as statements by scholars, regarding the prohibition of such things. But we cannot mention them here for lack of space.

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[703]Al-Bukhārī, 3210, 5762, 6213, 7561; Muslim, *As-Salām*, 2228; Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *Mushkil al-Āthār*, 3:114-5; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 3258.

[704]Al-Bukhārī, 2237, 2282, 5346, 5761; Muslim, 1567, 1568; Abū Dāwūd, 3428; At-Tirmidhī, 1276; An-Nasā'ī, 7:309; Ibn Mājah, 259; Aḥmad, 4:118-119, 120.

[705]Al-Bukhārī, 846, 1038, 4147, 7503; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 71; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 3906; An-Nasā'ī, 3:164-5; Aḥmad, 4:117; Al-Ḥumaydī, 813; Abdur-Razzāq, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 21003; Ibn Ḥibban, 188.

[706]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

Astrology has been censured by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah on the grounds that it traces the events of the earth to the conditions of the stars in the heavens. This has been condemned by all the messengers of Allah. The Qur'ān says, "And the magician thrives not (no matter) where he goes" [20:69], and "Have you not turned your vision to those who were given a portion of the Book. They believe in jibt and the taghut" [4:51]. 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb and others have said that jibt is sorcery.

Al-Bukhārī has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* the words of 'Ā'ishah, "My father, Abū Bakr, had a servant who worked for him. One day he brought some food and gave it to Abū Bakr, who ate it. He then said, 'Do you know what it was?' Abū Bakr asked, 'What was it?' He said, 'Once, before Islam came, I divined for a man although I did not know much. I only deceived the person. Today I met him and he gave me a tip. This was the thing from which you ate.' Abū Bakr inserted his finger into his throat and vomited all that he had eaten."[707]

It is the duty of the rulers and all those who are in authority to abolish astrology, divination, fortune-telling, geomancy, casting lots and taming voices, and forbid their performance in inns, houses, open places and roads. Those who know that these things are forbidden and have the power to destroy them but do not should recite the verse, "They did not forbid one another the iniquities which they committed. Evil indeed were the deeds which they did" [5:82]. Those who engage in these arts are cursed. They utter evil things and devour evil things. There is absolutely no disagreement among the *ummah* on this point. In the *Sunan* collections we also have a *ḥadīth* which Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq narrated from the Prophet (peace be on him), who said, "When people see evil and do not remove it, Allah may not take time to punish them all."[708]

People who commit these things which the Qur'ān and the Sunnah have forbidden are of different shades. Some of them are cheats; they say that they control jinns and have spiritual experiences like mystics, but they are simply frauds. They should be so severely punished that it proves a deterrent for others. Some of them may even be killed. I mean those who claim prophecy on the basis of their tricks or try to change the Shari'ah. Another category of people are those who seriously cultivate these things and resort to magic.

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[707] Al-Bukhārī, *Manāqib al-Anṣār*, 3843.

[708] At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr,* 2168; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Malaḥīm*, 4338; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 4005; Aḥmad, 1:2,5,7,9.

Scholars in general are of the opinion that magicians should be killed. This is the view of Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, and Aḥmad as reported of him, and the view of 'Umar, his son 'Abdullah, 'Uthmān and other Companions. If there is a difference among the *imāms* it is only with regard to the question of whether or not a magician should be first asked to recant or whether he should be declared *kāfir* for indulging in magic, or whether he should be killed on the grounds that he is causing mischief on earth. Some say that if he kills anybody with his magic he should be killed, but if he does not commit anything blasphemous (*kufr*) by his words or deeds he should not be killed but only punished. This is the view of Ash-Shāfi'ī and it is one opinion of Ahmad's school.[709]

There are different views as to what magic (*siḥr*) is. Most scholars say that magic is what causes the death or illness of a person without using any visible means. Others say that it is only a matter of thought. However, all agree that if it involves invoking the seven planets or any star, or praying to them, or prostrating before them or seeking their favor by wearing some kinds of rings or garments, or burning incense and so on, it is definitely an act of blasphemy and idolatry and it must be avoided and stopped. This was what the people of Abraham used to practice. That is why Allah says about Abraham, "And he glanced a glance at the stars and then said: Lo! I feel sick" [37:88-89]. Allah also says, "When the night grew dark upon him he beheld a star," until the verse, "Those who believe and obscure not their belief by polytheism, theirs is safety; and they are rightly guided" [6:76-82].

They also all agree that all spells, charms, oaths, and invocations that involve *shirk* must be prohibited, whether or not jinns are tamed by them. Every statement that contains *kufr* is disallowed. Even those spells whose meanings are unknown should also be eschewed, for they might involve *shirk* or *kufr*. Only those charms are allowed which do not involve *shirk*. "There is no harm in a charm," the Prophet said, "which does not have *shirk*."[710]

Seeking the protection of jinns is also forbidden. Allah has condemned the disbelievers for that practice. Allah says, "There were persons among mankind who took shelter with persons among the jinns, but they increased them in folly" [72:6]. When the Arabs passed through a certain valley they would say, "We seek refuge in the custodian of this valley from the harms that its evil beings may cause." They believed that by virtue of this incantation they would

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[709]See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 28:346, 29:384.

[710]Muslim, *As-Salām*, 2200; Abū Dāwūd, 3886.

be safe until the morning. "But they increased them in folly" means that when man seeks refuge in the jinns it only increases their sin, disobedience and evil. They would say that they had become protected from jinn and man. The jinn will also increase its haughtiness and will increase its *kufr* when man does such an action towards them.

Allah has said, "One day He will gather them all together and say to the angels: Was it you that these men used to worship? They will say: 'Glory to You, our tie is with You as Protector, not with them.' Nay, but they worshipped the jinns: most of them believed in them" [34:40-41]. These people say that they call upon the angels and invoke them through these charms and they visit them. They are utterly mistaken. The ones that descend upon them are evil jinns. Allah made this clear when He said, "One day He will gather them all together (and say): Assembly of jinns! Many among men did you seduce. Their friends among them would say: 'Our Lord! We make profit from each other, but (alas!) we reached our term which You did appoint for us.' He will say: the Fire be your dwelling place; you will dwell therein forever, except as Allah wills, for your Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge" [6:128]. Men benefit from jinns in the sense that they secure their ends and receive information about things unknown, and the jinns profit from men in the sense that they are honored, invoked, prayed to, and worshiped by men.

There are people who have evil experiences, who see visions, enter into dialogue with "invisible beings" (*rijāl al-ghayb*), and perform miracles, and, on that basis, claim that they are the friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah. Such people have assisted the polytheists against the Believers, and claimed that the Prophet (peace be on him) had asked them to fight the Believers and help the polytheists because the Believers had flouted the Shari'ah. In fact, they are the brethren of the polytheists.

Opinions differ regarding these people. Some scholars deny outright the existence of invisible beings; but they have been seen, and the testimony of those who have seen them has been transmitted by reliable persons. Had these people seen them and ascertained their existence, they would have submitted to them. Other scholars testify to their existence and accept the fact as the will of Allah; they believe that there is a way to Allah other than the way of the prophets. A third section, which rules out the existence of walis outside the sphere of prophetic followers, thinks, however, that both groups receive help from the Prophet (peace be on him). These people have respect for the Prophet (peace be on him) but are ignorant of his religion and the Shari'ah.

The truth is that these so-called *awliyā'* are followers of devils, and the invisible beings are none other than jinns. Jinns are called rijāl in the verse, "There are persons (*rijāl*) among mankind who took shelter with persons (*rijāl*) among the jinns. But they increased them in folly" [72:6]. Had they been men they would have been visible. True, men are sometimes not seen, but they are not invisible. Those who think that the *rijāl al-ghayb* are human are wrong. The reason people have differed regarding their identity is that they are not able to distinguish between the friends of Satan and the friends of Allah.

Some people say that Ṣūfis (*fuqarā'*) should be left alone to their experiences. This is wrong. We must examine their deeds and experiences in the light of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of Muḥammad (peace be on him). What agrees with them should be accepted, and what does not should be rejected. The Prophet said, "Whoever does something which differs from our ways, his work is null and void." In a variant of the *ḥadīth* the words are, "Whoever comes out with something new in our religion which does not belong to it, his innovation is null and void."[711] There is, therefore, no way (*ṭarīqah*) other than the way of the Prophet (peace be on him), no experience (*ḥaqīqah*) other than his experience, no *shari'ah* other than his Shari'ah, and no faith other than his faith. After him, no one will reach Allah and secure His favor or Paradise except by following the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), both externally and internally.

Whoever does not believe in the things he has said, and does not comply with what he has enjoined, whether it concerns the internal acts of the heart or the external acts of the body, is not even a Believer, let alone a friend (*wālī*) of Allah. It makes no difference whether he flies through the air, walks on the waters, peers into the Unseen, or turns wood into gold. What are his miracles worth? If he does not do what is enjoined, and refrain from what is forbidden, his miracles are nothing more than satanic acts which can only take him away from Allah and bring upon him His wrath. However, the insane, like infants, are not responsible; they neither have faith in Allah, nor submit to His commands internally and externally, which would make them friends of Allah, or members of His party that would be happy, or soldiers of His army that would be triumphant. They will be counted as Muslims following their Muslim parents, as

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[711] Al-Bukhārī, 2697; Muslim, 1718; Abū Dāwūd, 4606; Ibn Mājah, 14; Aḥmad, 6:270; Ibn Ḥibban, 26, 27.

Allah has said, "And those who believe and whose families follow them in faith, to them We will join their families. Nor will We deprive them (of the fruits) of aught of their deeds. Yet is each individual in pledge for his deeds" [52:21].

Some people think that simple-minded and ecstatic people are Allah's friends (*awliyā'*) even though they may not follow the Prophet (peace be on him) in his words, deeds and experiences. They are absolutely mistaken. These simple-minded persons can be either wicked enemies of religion, impostors and frauds, or insane, and therefore, excusable. How can one exalt them over the *awliyā'* of Allah, who follow His Messenger. How can they even compare with them? Some say that they may be following the Prophet (peace be on him) internally, if not externally. This is not correct. One must follow the Prophet internally as well as externally. Yūnus Ibn 'Abdul-A'lā As-Sadafī says that he said to Ash-Shāfi'ī that our friend, Al-Layth, used to say, "If you see a man walking on water do not extol him unless you examine his life in the light of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah." Ash-Shāfi'ī said, "Al-Layth has underscored the point. If you see a man walking on water and flying through the air, do not be deceived by him unless you examine him in the light of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah."

Some people claim that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I looked at the people of Paradise. Most of them were simpletons (*al-bulh*)."[712] But this is not a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, nor should one ascribe that statement to him. Paradise has been created for sane people whose reason leads them to faith in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers and the Last Day. Allah has described the people of Paradise at various places in His Book, but never has He mentioned *balah* (lack of intelligence) as one of their virtues. What the Prophet (peace be on him) has said is, "I cast a look at the people of Paradise and I saw that most of them were poor people (*al-fuqarā'*)."[713] He did not say simpletons (*al-bulh*).

Among the Ṣūfis there is a group called *malāmīyyah*.[714] They deliberately do things to invite blame on themselves and claim that

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[712]This is not a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him), as the Commentator has correctly pointed out. Some of its transmitters have been rated as weak, poor of memory, even liars, and the *ḥadīth* has been called rejected (*munkar*) and false (*bāṭil*). See the note by the editors, Dr. 'Abdullah 'Abdul-Muḥsin At-Turkī and Shu'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ, of *Sharḥ al- 'Aqīdah Aṭ-Ṭahawīyyah*, vol. 2, p. 770.

[713]Al-Bukhārī, 3241, 5198, 6449, 6546; Muslim, 2737; At-Tirmidhī, 2602, 2603; Aḥmad, 1:234, 359, 429; 4:429, 437, 443.

[714]The Malāmīyyah are a group of Ṣūfis who indulge in practices calling for public

they follow the Shari'ah in their heart. They think that in this way they fight off hypocrisy and conceit. But they fight one wrong with another wrong, none of which is correct.

Similarly, some Ṣūfis give a loud cry on hearing a beautiful song and fall unconscious. They are also misguided. It is not good for anyone to look for an opportunity to lose consciousness. The Companions and their Successors never lost consciousness, even when they heard the Qur'ān. Allah has described their experience in these words, "When Allah is mentioned they feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His verses rehearsed find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord" [8:2]; and, "Allah has revealed (from time to time) the most beautiful message in the form of a Book consistent with itself (yet) repeating (its teachings in various respects). The skins of those who fear the Lord tremble thereat. Then their skins and their hearts do soften to the celebration of Allah's praises. Such is the guidance of Allah. He guides therewith whom he pleases, but such as Allah leaves astray can have none to guide" [39:23].

Some scholars have mentioned in good terms "the wise of the insane" (*'uqalā al-majānīn*). They are the people who were sane at one time, then turned mad. One of their signs is that when they become a little saner they talk of the faith which is there in their hearts, and which saves them from falling into evil when they lapse into insanity. On the other hand, those who were infidel or wicked and then turned insane, their insanity does not erase the effects of their previous infidelity or wickedness. The Believers who were pious before they became insane will be raised along with other pious Believers on the Day of Judgment. However, loss of reason, whether produced by insanity or caused by anything else, does not elevate the status of its bearer, no matter whether you call him mad or insane. His faith and piety continue to be on the same level he was before. The intervening insanity neither increases nor decreases them; it only bars him from earning merits as it protects him from suffering punishment. As for the previous deeds, it does not affect them at all.

Hearing certain songs, some people begin to rave and speak in tongues. This is something satanic. It is Satan who speaks with their tongue, just as he speaks with the tongue of the possessed person. We cannot imagine that loss of reason is a cause or a condition for

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reproof only to assure their sincerity of purpose and avoid self-conceit or display of piety. Their founding leader was Abū Ḥamdān Qaṣṣār (d. 271) from Nishapur. See Jamī', *Nafahāt al-Uns*, p. 63; Hijwirī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, pp. 68-78.

Allah's love or favor. This is the belief of those who are absolutely mistaken. One of their poets has said:

> They are people who demolish the command,
> and pull down the hedge.
> They have no duties to do, no supererogatory acts to perform.
> They are insane, but the revelations of their insanity
> are so precious that sanity prostrates itself at their feet.

These are the lines of a misguided person, or rather an infidel, who thinks that one receives truths in madness that are not available to reason. He may have seen some madmen having visions or working wonders. Had he known that devils often associate with lunatics as they associate with magicians and diviners, he would not have thought that everyone who is insane and works wonders is a friend of Allah; that is sheer blasphemy. Allah has said, "Will I inform you (people,) on whom it is that the evil ones descend? They descend on every lying, wicked person" [26:221-222]. Hence, whoever is assisted by the evil ones must be lying and wicked.

Those who engage in various spiritual exercises, retire to abandoned places, and stay away from Friday prayers or the daily prayers in assembly are those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, although they think they are doing something good. Allah has sealed their hearts. The Prophet (peace be on him), as is recorded in the *Saḥīḥ*, said, "Whoever does not appear for three Friday prayers due to negligence and without any excuse, Allah seals his heart."[715] Whoever diverges from the path of the Sunnah and does so knowingly incurs the wrath of Allah; but if he does not know it, he is simply mistaken. This is the reason we have been asked to pray to Allah in every prayer to guide us to the straight path, the path of those on whom he has bestowed His grace – the prophets, the righteous (in word and deed), the martyrs, and the pious - and what a good company they form! They are not the ones who incur the wrath of Allah, nor are they those who have gone astray.

Some people argue from the story of Moses and Khidr that one can receive knowledge directly from Allah and dispense with the prophetic revelation. These people are absolutely mistaken; they are heretics who want to undermine Islam. Moses was not sent to Khidr, nor was Khidr required to obey him. That is why he asked

[715]The *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*, but it is not to be found in Al-Bukhārī or Muslim. It is mentioned in At-Tirmidhī, 500; Abū Dāwūd, 1052; An-Nasā'ī, 3:88; Ibn Mājah, 1125; Aḥmad, 3:424; Ibn Khūzaymah, 1857; Ibn Ḥibban, 554; Al-Ḥakīm, 1:280.

Moses whether he was the Moses of Banū Isra'il and Moses told him yes. Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him), on the other hand, was sent to all humanity. Had Moses and Jesus been alive they would have followed him. When Jesus comes down again he will judge according to the *shari'ah* of Muḥammad. Hence, if anyone thinks that he is with respect to Muḥammad (peace be on him) as Khidr was with respect to Moses, or believes that anyone else can be in that position, he should renew his faith and make the confession of faith afresh, for he is no longer a Muslim, let alone a *walī* of Allah. In fact, he is a *walī* of Satan. This is the line that separates the enemies of Islam from its rightful followers.

Those who say that the Ka'bah circumambulates some of their leaders, wherever they may be, are no better. I would ask them a simple question: How is it that the Ka'bah did not go to Hudaybīyyah and circumambulate the Prophet (peace be on him) when he was prevented from entering Makkah and looking upon it? These people are like those about whom Allah has said, "For oath, each one of them wants to be given scrolls (of revelation) spread out! By no means! But they fear not the Hereafter. Nay, this surely is an admonition. Let any who will, keep it in remembrance" [74:5].

(112) We believe that keeping together (*jamā'ah*) is the true and correct path, and that disunity leads to deviation and torment.

Allah has spoken on this subject many times, for example, "And hold fast all together, by the Rope which Allah (stretches out for you) and be not divided among yourselves" [3:103]; "Be not like those who are divided among themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs, for them is a dreadful penalty" [3:105]; "As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you have no part in them in the least. Their affair is with Allah. He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did" [6:159]; and, "Verily they will not cease to dispute, except those on whom your Lord has bestowed His mercy" [11:118-119]. The last verse clearly states that those who receive Allah's mercy avoid disputation and dissension. Allah has also said, "(Their doom is) because Allah sent down the Book in truth but those who seek causes of dispute in the Book are in a schism far (from the purpose)" [2:176].

I have already mentioned the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The people of the two books were divided into seventy-two sects, and this *ummah* will be divided into seventy-three sects (*millah*) all of which will go to Hell except one, and that

is the *jamā'ah.*" A variant of the *ḥadīth* states that the people asked, "What is the *jamā'ah*, Messenger of Allah?" He said, "It is the path my Companions and I are treading."[716] This *ḥadīth* clearly states that there will be dissension in the *ummah* and that all the dissenters will be doomed except the people who follow the Sunnah and preserve unity (the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah).

Aḥmad has recorded another *ḥadīth* reported by Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Satan is to man as the wolf is to the sheep. Remember that the wolf pounces on the sheep which leaves the flock. Refrain from schism, maintain unity, and adhere to the community and the mosque."[717] The *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded that when Allah revealed the words, "Say: He has power to send calamity on you from above," the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I take shelter from it in Your countenance." When Allah added, "or from below," he again said, "I seek refuge in Your countenance." Then Allah said, "or to cover you with confusion in party strife, giving you a taste of mutual vengeance, each from the other" [6:65], and the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "These two are less painful."[718]

This *ḥadīth* shows that Allah will set one group of the *ummah* against another and let them attack each other. It also shows that the Prophet (peace be on him) condemned this state of affairs, which is a kind of lapse into the ignorance of the pre-Islamic era. Az-Zuhrī said, "Troubles started when the Companions of the Prophet were still of a goodly number. They agreed that if a person was killed, any property was destroyed, or anyone was wounded on the basis of an interpretation of the Qur'ān, it would not be avenged. They treated it as if it had been committed during the period of ignorance."[719]

Mālik has recorded a report with its chain of transmitters that 'Ā'ishah said, "People have ceased to act upon the verse, 'If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them. But if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that transgresses until it

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[716]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

[717]Aḥmad, 5:232-233, 343; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, vol. 20, pp. 344, 345; Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Ḥilya*, 2:247. Al-Albānī says that its chain is weak.

[718]Al-Bukhārī, 4628, 7313, 7406; At-Tirmidhī, *At-Tafsīr*, 3065; Aḥmad, 3:309; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 4016; Al-Ḥumaydī, 1259. However, the Commentator is not correct that Muslim has also recorded the *ḥadīth*.

[719]See 'Abdur-Razzāq, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 18584; Al-Bayhaqī, *As-Sunan al-Kubra*, 8:175.

complies with the command of Allah [49:9]."[720] When one group of Muslims fights against another group, others must try to make peace between them, as Allah has said. If this is not done there will be disorder and chaos, and wars will go on endlessly, as it was before Islam.

When disputed matters, whether concerning the fundamentals of the religion or its details, are not referred to Allah and His Messenger (peace be on him), the correct view does not become evident and the disputants persist in confusion without any clear guidance. If Allah's mercy is upon them, they may tolerate each other and avoid war, as the Companions did in various controversies during the caliphates of 'Umar and 'Uthmān. They allowed each other to act upon his views in matters of *ijtihād* and refrained from fighting one another. But when people do not receive Allah's mercy, they quarrel and fight among themselves; they either denounce one another as infidel (*kāfir*) and wicked (*fāsiq*), or put each other in jail, or torture and kill one another. Those who forced people to say that the Qur'ān was created and persecuted people belonged to this type of group. They came out with a new, unjustified belief (*bid'ah*), denounced all those who disagreed with them as infidels, deprived them of their liberty, and subjected them to torture.

When people are unknowledgeable about any teaching of the Prophet (peace be on him), they may behave justly or unjustly. Those who act justly are those who act in accordance with what they know of prophetic *ḥadīth* and they do not wrong others. The wrongdoer is one who transgress against others, and most of them commit that wrong knowingly. Allah has said, "The people of the Book did not dissent therefrom except through envy of each other after knowledge had come to them" [3:19]; for if they had acted justly as they had been taught, they would have allowed others to act according to their views. They would have allowed the followers of different imāms to follow their imāms, because, as they said, they themselves were unable to find out the verdict of Allah and His Prophet (peace be on him) in matters, and had to refer to their imāms, who acted as the Prophet's deputies. This was the most they could do. Similarly, followers of the imāms should not say, if they want to be fair, that their imāms are correct even when they do not know their proofs, and that others are wrong, while they may be excused for what they do.

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[720] Al-Bayhaqī, *As-Sunan al-Kubra*, 8:172.

Differences on fundamentals are of two kinds: difference by variation and difference by contradiction. The former is of many kinds. One is wherein all the different views or practices are justified, for example, the different ways of reading certain verses of the Qur'ān that were prevalent among the Companions. One of them recited a particular verse in one way, and another in another way, and when the two quarreled, the Prophet (peace be on him) disapproved of their quarrel and said, "Both of you are correct."[721] the same is true of the different ways of the call to prayer (*ādhān*), or its announcement (*iqāmah*), or its opening; or of the causes for corrective prostration (*sajdat as-sahw*); the ways of *tashahhud*, or of prayer in times of fear; the number of *takbīr* in 'Īd prayers, and so on. All the different ways of doing these things have come down from the Prophet (peace be on him) and are equally lawful, even though some may be preferable to or stronger than others.

There have been people in the *ummah* who have quarreled and fought over some of these issues, for example, the issue of whether one should repeat the words of the *iqāmah* twice or just once. They certainly violate the command of the Prophet (peace be on him). There have also been people who, led by the desires in their hearts, not only stick to one idea or practice and refrain from others but even forbid them. They are guilty of committing the forbidden.

The second difference by variation is usually a matter of semantics. People often use different words to express the same idea, as for example, when they try to define a thing, argue from it or characterize it, and so on. It is unfair and wrong, in such cases, to extol one usage and condemn another or attack its proponent, and so on.

Difference by contradiction arises when two contradictory statements are made on an issue, whether concerning principles or details. According to the majority opinion, in such cases only one view can be correct, and since different views contradict each other, the issue becomes serious. However, my observation is that the view which one rejects often has an element of truth or has some texts to support it. This means that when you reject the opposing view, you are rejecting a truth along with the untruth. It also means that though your opponent is mistaken on the basic issue, you are also wrong in some respect.

This mistake is often committed by the Ahl as-Sunnah. As for the heretics (*ahl al-bid'ah*), their error is obvious. Everyone whom Allah has guided and enlightened will realize that the warning which

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[721]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

the Qur'ān and the Sunnah have issued against the views they expound is perfectly correct. Very often reason also exposes their error, in which case it is light upon light.

Returning to difference by variation, the practice of denouncing an opponent in such matters has not been approved. In fact, when at the time of the Prophet (peace be on him) a difference arose on a particular issue, people on either side did not reproach or censure each other. The Qur'ān appreciated that attitude in these words, "Whether you cut down (you Muslims) the tender palm-trees or you left them standing on their roots, it was by leave of Allah, and in order that He might cover with shame the rebellious transgressors" [59:5]. The difference arose about cutting down some trees (of the Banū Al-Nadhīr): one group cut them down and the other abstained from cutting. Another case has been referred to in the Qur'ān in this way, "And remember David and Solomon, when they gave judgment in the matter of the field into which the sheep of certain people had strayed by night. We did witness their judgment. To Solomon we inspired the correct understanding of the matter, (but) to each (of them) we gave judgment and knowledge" [21:87-89]. Notice that Allah inspired Solomon with the correct judgment, but he praised both for their knowledge and sagacity.

The Prophet (peace be on him) did the same in the case of those whom he had sent to the Banū Qurayẓah. He praised both those who said their *'Aṣr* prayer on time and those who said it later when they had reached the land of the Banū Qurayẓah.[722] He also said, "If a ruler makes every effort he can and arrives at the correct judgment, he will have two rewards. But if he makes every effort and does not arrive at the correct judgment, he will have one reward."[723]

The other kind of difference is when one party is to be commended and the other censured. This has been referred to in the verse, "If Allah had willed, the succeeding generations would not have fought among each other after clear signs had come to them, but they chose to wrangle, some believing and others rejecting" [2:253]; and the verse, "Those two antagonists dispute with each other about their Lord. But those who deny (their Lord), for them will be cut out a garment of Fire" [22:19].

Most of the differences in the *ummah* belong to the first category. They are produced by lust and avarice, and cause bloodshed, destruction of property, dissension and hatred. One

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[722] Al-Bukhārī, 946, 4119; Muslim, 1770; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 3798.

[723] Al-Bukhārī, 7353; Muslim, 1716; Abū Dāwūd, 3574; Ibn Mājah, 2314; Aḥmad, 4:198, 204, 205; At-Tirmidhī, 1326; An-Nasā'ī, 8:224.

party does not admit the truth which is with the other, and is unfair to it. Alongside the truth it has, it acquires some untruths. The other party does the same. This is why Allah has traced the difference to mutual envy and transgression. He has said, "And no one differed other than the people who were given the Book; they differed after the clear signs had come to them on account of transgression (*bāghī*) one upon the other" [2:213]. Allah has mentioned *bāghī* – going beyond the acceptable limit – in many places so that our *ummah* may learn the lesson.

The Prophet (peace be on him) expressed the same idea in a *ḥadīth* recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Abū Az-Zanad narrated from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Do not worry about things I have left out. People before you ruined themselves by asking too many questions and disputing about the teachings of their prophets. Refrain from what I have forbidden, and do what I have commanded to the best of your ability."[724] the Prophet (peace be on him) did not like people to delve into things that he had not discussed, or put a lot of questions about those things he had commanded and dispute about them, for that had destroyed the earlier communities.

Differences among the Believers regarding the Book of Allah are of two kinds, one about its revelation, and the other about its understanding. However, on both issues, every group has only part of the truth with it. The first issue is, for example, how the Qur'ān is Allah's speech, and how it has been communicated. One group says that the Qur'ān is Allah's speech in the sense that He has produced it out of His will and Power, but He has created it in some other thing, so that it does not subsist in Him. Others say that it is an attribute of Allah that subsists in Him, and not something which He has created, but He has not spoken it of His will and Power. Both of them have an element of truth with them and an element of untruth. Each believes in the truth it has and denies the truth that the other has. We have discussed this point earlier.

As for the matter of interpretation, there are also many views and every view has some truth with it and some untruth. 'Amr Ibn Shu'ayb has reported from his father and he from his father that once the Prophet (peace be on him) came to a group of his Companions who were discussing the issue of pre-destination. Some were referring to one verse of the Qur'ān, and others to another. The Prophet (peace be on him) got angry, his cheeks

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[724] Al-Bukhārī, 7288; Muslim, 1337; At-Tirmidhī, 2679; An-Nasā'ī, 5:110-11; Ibn Mājah, 2; Aḥmad, 2:247, 313, 428, 456-7, 467, 482, 495, 508, 517.

became red like a pomegranate. He said, "Is this what you are asked to do? Is this what is required of you? Are you to set one part of the Qur'ān against another? Mind the things I have said, carry out what I have commanded, and refrain from what I have forbidden." In a variant of the *ḥadīth* the words are, "The things that you are doing have led many a people astray. They quarreled over the teachings of their prophets, and set one part of their book against another. The Qur'ān has not been given to you for you to oppose some of its verses against others. They support and bear out one another. Act upon what you understand of the Qur'ān, and believe in what you do not." Another variant adds, "The communities before you were not cursed until they disagreed among themselves. Disputation over a verse of the Qur'ān is a kind of infidelity."[725] This is a famous *ḥadīth* and has been recorded in *Musnad* and *Sunan* collections. Its main part has also been produced by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from 'Abdullah Ibn Ribah Al-Anṣārī. He said that one day at noon, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr came to the Prophet (peace be on him). Two men were quarreling over a verse of the Qur'ān. The Prophet (peace be on him) came out, his face red with anger. He said, "The people before you were destroyed when they quarreled over their book."[726]

Different heretical groups interpret the Qur'ān differently. They believe in some parts of it and deny others. They accept what agrees with their views and reject what does not. They either change the meaning of the verses by interpretation or declare them ambiguous and unclear, concerning which their meanings are not known to anyone. This is how they deny the ideas which Allah has communicated. This is simply blasphemous (*kufr*). To believe in words without believing they have meanings is to believe as People of the Book believe, about whom Allah has said, "The similitude of those who were charged with (the obligations of) the Mosaic law but who subsequently failed in those (obligations) is that of a donkey which carries huge tomes (but understands them not)" [62:5]; and "There are among them illiterates who know not the Book, but see (therein their own) desires, and they do nothing but conjecture" [2:78]. That is, they read the Book without understanding it. This is not the way a Believer should approach the Qur'ān. He should act upon what he understands of it, and leave to Allah what he does not understand. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Act upon what you understand, and what you do not understand leave to one who

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[725]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.
[726]Discussed earlier; it is authentic.

understands it."[727] This is how one will obey the Prophet (peace be on him).

(113) the religion of Allah in the heavens and on the earth is one, and it is the *dīn* of Islam. Allah has said, "Verily the religion before Allah is Islam" [5:3]; and, "(Allah) has chosen for you as your religion Islam" [5:3]. Islam steers a course between excess and negligence, between anthropomorphism and negation, between coercionism and libertarianism, between complacency and despair.

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* there is a *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "We, the community of prophets, have a single religion."[728] In the Qur'ān, Allah says, "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him" [3:85]. This declaration is for all times. Religion is one for all peoples, past and present. The difference is only in matters of law (*Shar'*). Allah has said, "To each among you We have prescribed a law and an open way" [5:51].

Islam is the religion that Allah has promulgated for mankind through His prophets. Its basic principles as well as its details have all come from the prophets. Its ideas are clear to everyone, young and old, literate and illiterate, intelligent and unintelligent. One can enter into its fold in no time, and get out of it even faster, just by denying a word, falsifying or contesting it, attributing something to Allah that He has not revealed, or doubting what He has revealed, defying His commandments, refusing to believe His statements, and so on.

One who is aware of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah will testify that Islam is a clear religion, easy to learn. People would come to the Prophet (peace be on him) from great distances, learn Islam from him and return to their homes. One might find some difference in his wordings, but that is because he instructed everyone according to people's conditions. If someone came from a far-off country, like D*imām* Ibn Thatlabah[729] or the man from Najd,[730] or the people of

[727]Part of the *ḥadīth* just mentioned.

[728]Al-Bukhārī, 3443; Muslim, 2365; Aḥmad, 2:406, 437; Abū Dāwūd, 4675.

[729]Dammām Ibn Thatlabah belonged to the tribe of Sa'd Ibn Bakr. He visited the Prophet in Madinah in the ninth year of the hijrah and embraced Islam. (See Ibn Hishām, *As-Sīrah*, 2:573-5; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1388/1968, vol. 1, p. 299; Aḥmad, 2382; Abū Dāwūd, 487; Al-Bukhārī, 63; Muslim

'Abdul-Qays,[731] he would teach them what they would not forget. He knew, however, that his religion would reach the different corners of the world, and that he would be sending missionaries to teach people whatever they needed to know. If someone came from a nearby place and could visit frequently afterwards, he taught him one thing after another gradually. If he knew that the questioner was aware of the basic principles he would tell him more advanced things. It was to such a questioner that he once said, "Say, 'I believe in Allah and keep constantly on the correct path.'"[732]

However, those who invent new things which Allah has not sanctioned cannot find any justification for them in the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be on him), or in the teachings of any other messenger. Their ideas as well as what they imply are equally wrong, just as the truth and all its implications are correct.

The author states, "Islam steers a course between excess and negligence." Allah has said, "People of the Book! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter anything about Allah save the truth" [4:171]; "Say: People of the Book! Exceed not in your religion the bounds (of what is proper) trespassing beyond the truth" [5:80]; and, "You who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which Allah made lawful for you. But commit no excess, for Allah loves not those given to excess. Eat of the things which Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and fear Allah in Whom you believe" [5:90-91].

The *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded that 'Ā'ishah said, "Some Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) asked his wives about his routine of worship at home. When they were told about it, one of them said that he would not eat meat, another said that he would not marry, and a third said that he would not sleep in a bed. When the Prophet (peace be on him) came to know of this, he said, 'What has happened to these people? Why are they thinking of such things? Look at me: I fast some days and eat some days; I sleep as well as pray in the night. I eat meat, and I have wives. Whoever turns away from my way (Sunnah) is not of me.'"[733] In a variant of the *ḥadīth* recorded in other collections the

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[730]See Al-Bukhārī, 46, 1891, 2678, 6956; Muslim, 11; Mālik, *Al-Muwaṭṭa*, 1:175.

[731]See Al-Bukhārī, 53; Muslim, 17; and for details, see Ibn Qayyīm, *Zādal-Ma'ād*, 3:205-209.

[732]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 38; Aḥmad, 3:413, 385; At-Tirmidhī, 2410; Ibn Mājah, 3972; Ibn Ḥibban, 2543; Ad-Dārimī, *Sunan*, 2:298.

[733]Al-Bukhārī, 5063, 6601, 7301; Muslim, 1401, 2356; An-Nasā'ī, 6:60; Aḥmad, 3:241, 259, 285, 6:45; Al-Baghawī, 96, 100.

words are, "They inquired about the Prophet's worship, when they were told about it, they considered it to be too little."[734]

Ibn Jurayj reported from 'Ikrimah that the reason verses 90 and 91 of Sūrat Al-Mā'idah were revealed was that 'Uthmān Ibn Maẓ'ūn, 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, Ibn Mas'ūd, Al-Miqdād Ibn Al-Aswad and Sālim, the client of Abū Hudayfah (may Allah be pleased with them all) thought to devote themselves exclusively to Allah. They were going to sit at home, staying away from their wives, wearing the clothes of an ascetic and abstaining from good food. They ate and wore only what the Christian mendicants would eat and wear, and they even intended to have themselves castrated. Nights they passed in worship, and days in fasting.

Then Allah revealed the verse, "You who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which Allah made lawful for you. But commit no excess, for Allah loves not those given to excess. Eat of the things which Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and fear Allah in Whom you believe" [5:90-91]. This was revealed concerning their abandoning their wives, food and clothing, and their continual fasting and late-night prayers, as well as their thought of castration. When the Prophet received news about them, he sent for them and said, "Your body has a right on you, and your eyes have a right on you. Fast, but also eat; pray, but also sleep. He is not of us who leaves our way." Thereupon, they turned to Allah and said, "Lord! We accept and submit to what You have revealed."[735]

"Islam steers a course between anthropomorphism and negation." We have explained earlier that Allah loves to be described in the way He has described Himself, or as His Prophet (peace be on him) has described Him, without comparing His attributes with our attributes. We should not think that He hears as we hear, or sees as we see, and so on. Nor should we negate His attributes and deny what He has predicated of Himself or what the person most knowledgeable of Him, His Prophet (peace be on him), has predicated of Him. Negation is as wrong as comparison. We have discussed this point before. The author himself referred to it when he wrote, "Whoever does not refrain from negation as well as comparison strays and fails to uphold true transcendence." The basis of this idea is the verse, "There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him, and He is Als-Seeing, All-Hearing" [42:19]. The first part of

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[734] Aḥmad, 3:259; Al-Bayhaqī, *As-Sunan al-Kubra*, 7:77; Al-Bukhārī, 5063.

[735] *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, 12348; As-Suyūṭī, *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr*, 2:307-308. This particular narration, though, is weak according to Al-Albānī.

the verse is a refutation of anthropomorphism, and the second of negation.

"Islam is between coercionism and libertarianism." We have also discussed this topic. We have said that man is not coerced into his words or deeds. His actions are not like the movements of a shivering person or of a tree swaying under a strong wind. Nor are they created by man; they are accomplished by man but created and brought into existence by Allah.

We have also discussed the idea the author has expressed in the words, "Islam is between complacency and despair." We have said that man must fear the punishment of Allah on the one hand, and expect His mercy on the other, and that fear and hope are like the two wings with which one flies to Allah and to the last abode.

(114) This is our faith and our religion in form and spirit. We have nothing to do with those who differ from what we have said and elaborated. We pray to Allah that He may confirm us in faith, let us die upon it, save us from erroneous ideas and heretical doctrines such as those advanced by the anthropomorphists (*mushābbihah*), Mu'tazilah, Jahmīyyah, determinists (*Jabarīyyah*), free-willers (*Qadarīyyah*), and others who have differed from the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah and fallen into error. We have nothing to do with them. In our view, they are astray in their thinking and wrongdoers. And to Allah we turn for guidance and safety.

"This" refers to all the author has said from the beginning of the book until here. By anthropomorphists (*mushābbihah*), he means those who conceive of Allah's attributes on the analogy of human attributes. They do just the reverse of what the Christians do. The latter conceive of a creation, Jesus, peace be upon him, on the pattern of the Creator, and make him a god. These people, on the other hand, liken the Creator to the created and anthropomorphize Him. One of the leading exponents of this view was Dāwūd Al-Jawāribī.

The Mu'tazilah, like 'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd, Wāsil Ibn 'Atā' Al-Ghazzāl and their followers, were given this name because they seceded from the Community (*jamā'ah*) after the death of Al-Ḥassan

Al-Baṣrī[736] in the beginning of the second century Hijrī, and held separate meetings. According to Qatādah and others, this is the reason they are called Mu'tazilah, or Secessionists. Others say that the first man to develop the basic idea of that school was Wāsil Ibn 'Atā', and 'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd, a student of Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣrī, joined him. During the reign of Hārūn Ar-Rashīd, Abū Al-Hudhayl wrote two books and expounded their doctrines at length. He was the one who formulated the five tenets of the school: justice, unity of Allah, enforcement of the threatened punishment, the position between two positions, and the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil. In those doctrines, the Mu'tazilah have mixed truth with untruth, a common characteristic of all heretical schools.

With regard to divine acts they are anthropomorphists. They imagine Allah's acts on the pattern of human acts. They say that what is good for man is good for God, and what is bad for man is bad for God. Basing their thoughts on this principle, they claim that Allah has to do certain things and eschew others. This is wrong. Suppose a person finds his male servants fornicating with his maid servants but does not stop the sin; he is either approving it or he is unable to check it. But this is not what we say when Allah does not stop his servants from fornication. Hence His actions cannot be judged on the pattern of human actions. This is a very important point. The reader is advised to consult the relevant works on the subject.

The Mu'tazilah deny the fore-ordainment of things on the pretext of justice. They say that Allah does not create evil or ordain it. If He created it and then punished people for doing it, He would be committing injustice. But Allah is just and cannot commit injustice. Hence there has to be in His Kingdom, they conclude, what He does not will, for it is not possible that He wills something and it does not come into being; that would mean that He is not omnimpotent. Far exalted is Allah above that. By a similar argument they deny the uncreated nature of the Qur'ān, under the cover of their doctrine of divine unity. They say that if the Qur'ān were uncreated there would be more than one eternal being. But they do not realize that it also follows from their argument that knowledge, power, and all the other attributes of Allah are created. They cannot deny this without contradicting themselves.

The essence of their third principle is that since Allah has threatened sinners with punishment, He cannot withdraw it and defy

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[736]The text says after the death of Al-Ḥassan, but most likely this is simply a mistake, as the event actually took place during Al-Ḥassan's life.

his own verdict. Just as He cannot go back on his promise, He cannot go back on his threat. This means that He cannot pardon and forgive whomever He wills.

The doctrine of the position between the two positions means that when a person commits a grave sin he loses faith, but does not enter into not having faith. Their last doctrine means that we must enjoin upon others what we are ourselves commanded to do, and ask them to believe in what we are required to believe. Under cover of this principle they have justified armed revolt against the rulers (*a'immah*) when they perpetrate an injustice.

We have discussed these doctrines earlier, and need not enter into them here. The Mu'tazilah claim that their doctrines of justice and unity of Allah are rational truths, that they are prior to revelation, and that they form the basis for its rational justification. If they advance some arguments from *ḥadīth* in their support, they advance them only as additional evidence. They boast that they do not base their principles on *ḥadīth*, and that they know their truths even before they know the authenticity of the *ḥadīth*. That is why some of them do not use textual evidence for their arguments; they carry little value in their eyes. Others include them just to show that revelation agrees with reason, also to win over the consent of people for their doctrines. They do not base them on revelation. The Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* are for them only supporting evidence, like an additional force not necessary to meet the enemy, or an additional exhortation for something that one likes to have by himself.

It is against this treatment of the *Shar'* that 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-'Azīz warned when he said, "Do not be like those who follow the truth when it agrees with their wishes, and oppose it when it does not. You will not be rewarded because your wish happens to coincide with the truth; but you certainly will be chastised if you do not comply with it, for in either case you are only following your wish." In the same way, actions will be judged according to their intentions, and everyone will have what he has intended.[737] Action depends on motive and intention, and conviction depends on knowledge and assent. If conviction concerns a matter of faith, it is part of faith; and if a deed is done with a good motive it is good, otherwise not. Hence the ideas of the Believers that are based on things other than faith are like the acts of good people that are not done with good motives. In the fold of the Mu'tazilah there are

[737]Al-Bukhārī, 1, 54, 2529, 3898, 5070, 6689, 6953.

many who are enemies (*zindīq*) of Islam; their efforts have gone to waste in this life, even though they think that they are doing good.

The Jahmīyyah are the followers of Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān As-Samarqandī. Jahm negated the attributes of Allah and denuded them of their meaning. He learned this from Al-Ja'd Ibn Dirham, whom Khālid Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Qasrī killed on the Festival of Sacrifice ('Īd al-Aḍha). Addressing the gathering on that occasion, he said, "People! Offer your sacrifices, and may Allah accept them. As for me, I will sacrifice Ja'd Ibn Dirham. He says that Allah did not take Ibrāhīm for His friend, nor did He speak to Moses. Exalted is Allah above what he says about Him." Then he descended from the pulpit and killed Ja'd. He had already consulted the scholars of his time, who were from the Elders, and gotten their advice. May Allah bless them.

Jahm expounded the ideas of Al-Ja'd after him in Khuraṣān and got a following. He entered into a debate with some polytheists called the Sumanīyyah,[738] became a skeptic and abandoned prayer for forty days. The Sumanīyyah were a group of Indian philosophers who denied everything except sense perception. They asked Jahm, "Can the Lord whom you worship be seen, smelled, tasted or touched?" He answered in the negative. They said, "Then He is non-existent." Jahm could not answer, and abstained from worshiping anything for forty days.[739] When the god of his conception went out of his mind, Satan replaced it with another, whom his imagination created next. He claimed that Allah is pure existence without any attributes, and followed Ja'd's line of thought.

It has been reported that Ja'd had contacts with the Sabaean philosophers of Ḥarrān, and took a few ideas from some Jewish philosophers who had left their religion and joined the company of Labid Ibn Al-Ā'ṣam, the magician who had cast a spell over the Prophet (peace be on him). Jahm was killed by Salm Ibn Ahwaz at Khurasan, where his ideas had already become popular. The Mu'tazilah adopted his ideas though not to the extent that he did in negating Allah's attributes. He denies the names any reality, but they deny only the attributes, accepting the names.

Scholars have discussed the question of whether the Jahmīyyah are included in the seventy-two damned sects (referred to in *ḥadīth*).

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[738]The Sumanīyyah are the Buddhists, followers of Gautama Buddha.

[739]See Al-Qāsimī, *Tārīkh al-Jahmīyyah wa al-Mu'tazilah*, (Beirut: Muwassat Ar-Risālah, 1399/1979), pp. 22-23.

Among those who consider them outside the realm are scholars such as 'Abdullah Ibn Mubārak and Yūsuf Ibn Asbaṭ.

Their ideas spread at the time when Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and other scholars were being put to trial. They gained in strength and number during the reign of Mā'mūn, who resided for some time in Khurasan and came into contact with the Jahmīyyah. It was from Tarsus that he issued orders for the trial of the scholars in the year 218 A.H. Mā'mūn died the same year. In 220 A.H., Imām Aḥmad was put in prison in Baghdad. The same year Mu'taṣim called him to debate with the Mu'tazilah. Aḥmad refuted all the arguments they advanced, showed that their beliefs had no basis and that they were wrong in calling people to their beliefs and putting them to torture. Mu'taṣim intended to set Aḥmad free, but certain people advised him that Aḥmad should be beaten, lest the prestige of the government be impaired. Aḥmad was beaten and the news spread among the masses. The government was frightened and set him free. For details of the story the reader should consult the history books.

Jahm held some views that no one shared with him. He said that Paradise and Hell would perish in the end; that faith (*imān*) is nothing but knowledge and not having faith (*kufr*) is nothing but ignorance; that no one does anything, everything is done by Allah; and that actions are attributed to men only metaphorically, just as it is said that a tree moves, the heavens revolve, or the sun sets. A poet has said of Jahm:

> "I wonder that Satan openly calls people to the Fire,
> under a name which is derived from *Jahannam* (Hell)."

Abū Ḥanīfah was asked about his view on body and incident. He said, "A curse be upon 'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd for leading people to discuss such subjects."

The determinists (Jabrīyyah) derive their basic doctrine from Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān, as we have said before. They believe that the acts of man are as determined as his height and color. This is diametrically opposed to the view of the free-willers (*qadarīyyah*) who deny predestination (*qadr*). The Qadarīyyah are called Qadarīyyah because they deny *qadr*, just as the Murji'ah are called Murji'ah because they deny *irja'*, namely that people are not left to the judgment of Allah whether He punishes them or forgives them. The Jabrīyyah have been sometimes called Qadarīyyah because they affirm *qadr* or predestination in an exaggerated sense. This is like calling the Murji'ah those who say that we cannot be certain about reward or punishment, that all matters concerning individuals or species are deferred, that no one can even say that those who repent will or will

not be rewarded, or that those who do not repent will or will not be punished. The earliest Murji'ah even abstained from saying anything about 'Uthmān and 'Alī and testifying to their faith or lack of faith.

The compilers of the *Sunan* collections have recorded many *aḥādīth* censuring the Qadarīyyah. One is what Abū Dāwūd has recorded in his *Sunan* from 'Abdul-'Azīz Ibn Abī Hazim, through his father and through Ibn 'Umar, that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The Qadarīyyah are the Magians of this *ummah*. Do not visit them when they are ill, or join their funeral processions when they die."[740] There are many more *aḥādīth* about them, but the *ḥadīth* scholars have doubted if they were spoken by the Prophet (peace be on him). The truth is that they are the words of some Companions. Different, however, is the case with the *aḥādīth* about the Khawārij. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections alone, there are ten *aḥādīth* about them. Three of them have been recorded by Al-Bukhārī and all ten by Muslim. The resemblance of the Qadarīyyah to the Magians is quite obvious. In fact, their doctrine is in a sense worse than that of the Magians, for the latter posit only two creators, while they posit innumerable creators.

These heresies, which contradict one another, emerged during different periods of trial and tribulation in the history of the *ummah*. Al-Bukhārī has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that Sa'īd Ibn Al-Musayyib said, "When the first calamity, namely the murder of 'Uthmān, occurred, none who had participated in the battle of Badr survived. When the second calamity occurred it took its toll of all those who had participated in the campaign of Hudaybīyyah. When the third calamity occurred, it took away the power and the reason of the people."[741] The Khawārij and the Shī'ah emerged during the first period, the Qadarīyyah and the Murji'ah in the second, and the Jahmīyyah and other sects after the third. They were thus the people who divided the religion and broke it up into sects.

They opposed one heresy with another heresy. One exceeded all limits in love of 'Alī, while another called him an infidel. One sect exaggerated the threats of punishment, even condemned a section of the Believers to Hell forever; while another belittled all punishments and even abolished some of them altogether - I mean the Mujri'ah. One overdid Allah's transcendence to the extent that His attributes were negated, while another affirmed His attributes to such excess that He was completely anthropomorphized. All came out with

[740] Discussed earlier; it is weak.
[741] Al-Bukhārī, 4024.

problems and arguments that had no basis in the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and they discarded those which the Qur'ān and Sunnah offered. Some even delved into the books of the Jews, Christians, Magians, and Sabaeans, and took many of their ideas and arguments, changing sometimes their words and sometimes their meaning. They thus came out with a mixture of truth and untruth, shelving the truth which the Prophet (peace be on him) had taught. This led to disputes and controversies on such things as substance, incidents, corporeality, and so on.

The reason for the errors of these and other sects was that they left the straight path that Allah had commanded them to follow. He has said, "Verily, this is My Way, leading straight. Follow it, and follow not (other) paths. They will scatter you about from His (great) Path" [6:153]; and, "Say (Prophet): This is My Way, I do invite unto Allah on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes, I and whoever follows me" [12:108]. See how "ways" of the people has been put in the plural in contrast to the Way of Allah in the singular. Ibn Mas'ūd says that once the Prophet (peace be on him) drew a line and said, "This is the Way of Allah." Then he drew some other lines left and right of that line and said, "These are the ways on each of which there is an evil one who calls people to it." He then recited the verse, "Verily, this is My Way, leading straight. Follow it, (and) follow not (other) paths. They will scatter you about from His (great) path. Thus does He command you that you may be righteous" [6:153].[742]

The most important thing we can do is pray for the correct path. This is why Allah has commanded us to recite the opening *sūrah* of the Qur'ān (Al-Fatiḥah) in every *rak'ah* of every prayer, obligatory or otherwise, and pray for the Straight Path. This is also the reason many scholars consider the reading of Al-Fatiḥah in every *rak'ah* to be compulsory. In fact, it is one of the greatest and noblest prayers. Allah has commanded us to say in it, "Show us the Straight Path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, those whose portion is not wrath, and who go not astray" [1:6-7].

Commenting on these words, the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "The Jews are the people whose portion is wrath, and the Christians are the ones who went astray."[743] The Prophet (peace be on him) has also said, "You will certainly follow the ways of the

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[742] Ad-Dārimī, *Sunan*, 1:67; Aḥmad, 1:435, 465; *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, 14168; Al-Ḥakīm, 2:318, and Adh-Dhahabī has endorsed Al-Ḥakīm's evaluation of it being authentic.

[743] Part of a long *ḥadīth*, At-Tirmidhī, 2954, 2955; Aḥmad, 4:378; Aṭ-Tayālisī, 1040; Ibn Ḥibban, 1715, 2279.

people that went before you, step by step, to the extent that if they go into the hole of a lizard you will also enter it." People asked him, "Messenger of Allah, do you mean the Jews and Christians?" He said, "Who else!"[744] This *ḥadīth* has been recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections.

A number of the Elders stated, "If a scholar deviates from the correct path, he thereby resembles the Jews. If a devotee deviates, he thereby resembles the Christians." This is the reason you see that heretical theologians like the Mu'tazilah bear some resemblance to Jews. It is not without reason that the Jewish scholars loved the books of the Mu'tazilah and lauded their views, while the leaders of the Mu'tazilah felt an affinity with the Jews and preferred them to the Christians. Most misguided Ṣūfis, on the other hand, bear a resemblance to Christians. They have a liking for monasticism, incarnation, unification, and other similar things. They condemn the theologians, and the theologians condemn them and criticize their ideas regarding musical sessions (*samā'*), ecstasy (*wajd*), and a number of ascetic and devotional practices which they have developed.

The heretical sects treat revelation in two ways.[745] Some alter the meaning of the texts, while others charge the prophets with ignorance. The former are of two types. One group says that revelation uses imagery; they are the *ahl al-wahm wa at-takhyil*; the other group misinterprets and distorts the texts, they are the ahl at-*taḥrīf wa at-ta'wīl*. The first group[746] says that the prophets spoke of Allah, the Hereafter, Paradise and Hell in words that do not reveal the truth. They used symbols and images with which their people were conversant; consequently, the latter believed that Allah was a huge being, that bodies will be resurrected, and that people will enjoy pleasures in Paradise and suffer pain in Hell pertaining to their bodies. In reality, however, things will be completely different. The prophets had to say what they said because that was the only way to reform and elevate the common people. If they said what was not true, it was only for the good of the people. That was the view of Ibn Sina and others like him.

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[744]Al-Bukhārī, 3456, 7320; Muslim, 2669; Aḥmad, 3:84, 89, 94; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 2178; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 74; Al-Baghawī, 4196. See also Ibn Mājah, 3994; Aḥmad, 2:327, 450, 511, 527; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 72, Al-Ḥakīm, 1:37.

[745]See Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Bada'ī al-Fawā'id* (Makkah, Maktabat An-Nahḍah Al-Islamīyyah As-Sa'udīyyah, n.d., 2:32.

[746]See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Dar' Ta'ārud al-'Aql wa an-Naql*, 1:8-9.

The second group[747] which misinterprets and distorts revelation says that the prophets did not intend to convey what their words apparently mean; they only conveyed the truths we discover through reason. Hence they try by every means to interpret the revelation to agree with their own ideas. It is not surprising, therefore, that most of them are not sure of their interpretations, and hold out the possibility that the texts may mean something different.

As for those who say that the prophets and their followers are unaware of the truth, they are only ignorant of what Allah wants to convey through the book He has revealed, or through the words He has inspired in His prophets. They assert that it is quite possible that no one knows the real meaning of the Scripture besides Allah, neither Gabriel nor Muḥammad, nor any other prophet, not to mention the Companions and the Successors. When Muḥammad (peace be on him) pronounced the verse, "Allah Most Gracious is firmly established on the Throne" [20:5], or "To Him mount up (all) words of purity" [35:10], or "What prevents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My hands" [38:75], he did not know their real meaning, nor does any one else know it except Allah. This is, they claim, what the Elders believed.

Some people in this group say that what Allah means by these words is different from what they apparently suggest, and that no one knows their real meaning except Allah, just as no one knows when the Hour will come except He. Others admit that, in principle, texts should be interpreted literally, but they say, like their comrades, that the Prophet (peace be on him) did not explain the real intention of many Qur'ānic verses which they regard to be allegorical and vague. The result is that there is no agreement among them as to which verses are allegorical and which are not. A few of them even say that the Prophet (peace be on him) himself was not aware of the real meanings, and that he left it to scholars to discern the real meanings by interpreting the verses in the light of rational principles.

To sum up, these people are one in saying that the Prophet (peace be on him) either did not know or did not explain, and that they have succeeded in unraveling the truth with their reason. They are therefore justified, they claim, in interpreting the words of the Prophet (peace be on him) according to their reason. They also claim that the prophets and their followers were not acquainted with the rational sciences, and therefore did not understand the revealed texts. All these ideas of theirs are false and rubbish.

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[747] Ibid., 1:12-20.

We pray to Allah to save us from them and their proponents. Glory to You, Lord, the Lord of Honor and Power. You are free from what they ascribe to You. And peace be on the messengers. All praise is for You, Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

'ABDUL-JABBĀR: 'Abdul-Jabbār Ibn Aḥmad Al-Ḥamadānī (d. 415/1024), an eminent theologian and writer, leader of the Mu'tazilah of his time, Shāfi'ī jurist and grand judge of Rayy, was the author of many books. His magnum opus on theology was *Al-Mughnī,* which has been edited and published in many volumes by Ad-Dār al-Miṣrīyyah li at-Talīf wa at-Tarjumah in Cairo. His *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah* is a one-volume exposition on the fundamental principles of the Mu'tazilah. He also commented on some selected chapters and verses of the Qur'ān under the title *Tanzīh al-Qur'ān min al-Matā'in*. He also discussed some allegorical verses under the title, *Mutashābiḥ al-Qur'ān* (edited by Dr. 'Adnān Zarzūr, 1969).

'ABDULLAH IBN RAWĀḤAH: 'Abdullah Ibn Rawāḥah Ibn Tha'labah Al-Anṣārī (d. 8/629), a poet and warrior from the Khazraj tribe in Madinah, gave allegiance to the Prophet (peace be upon him) along with others at the valley of 'Aqabah beofre the Prophet migrated to Madinah. He participated in all the battles beginning with Badr. In one of the campaigns, the Prophet (peace be upon him) appointed him governor of Madinah in the Prophet's absence. He was beseiged along with others at Mawtah and killed.

ABŪ BAKR: Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq (573-13/634), the closest friend of the Prophet (peace be on him) before and after Islam, the greatest of all the Companions and the first caliph, suppressed the apostasy of the Arabs after the Prophet's death, reestablished the rule of Islam over Arabia, and had the Qur'ān collected and written down in one volume.

ABŪ AD-DARDĀ': Abū Ad-Dardā' 'Uwaymīr Ibn Mālik Ibn Qays Al-Anṣārī (d. 32/652) was a great Companion of the Prophet from the Khazraj tribe of Madinah. He was also an ascetic and a warrior. He was appointed judge over Damascus by Mu'āwīyah at the order of Caliph 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb. He was a scholar of the Qur'ān and taught it in Syria where he died. He narrated 117 *aḥādīth*.

ABŪ ḤANĪFAH: Abū Ḥanīfah An-Nu'mān Ibn Thābit Ibn Zutī (80/699-150/767), the great founder of the Ḥanafī school of *fiqh*, was born and brought up in Kūfah in a family that had come to Iraq from Afghanistan. Besides *fiqh*, Abū Ḥanīfah also considerably influenced the development of orthodox theology. The book, *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar,* is attributed to him but it is certainly not his work. However, judging from the various statements that have been preserved from him in different works that mention him, his views on *imān*, *islām*, predestination, human freedom and responsibility,

sin and salvation, and the status of the Qur'ān can be ascertained. These views were later developed by people of his school, particularly Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī (d. 332/943). See A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1965), chs. VI-VII; Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, *Abū Ḥanīfah: Ḥāyātuhu wa Asruhu wa Arā'uhu wa Fiqhuhu* (Cairo: Dār Al-Fikr, n.d.), pp. 168-188.

ABŪ ḤUDHAYFAH: Abū Ḥudhayfah Ibn 'Utbah Ibn Rabī'ah (d. 12/633) was a Companion who first migrated to Abyssinia and then to Madinah. He participated in the battle of Badr and all subsequent battles. He was killed during the Battle of Yamāmah.

ABŪ AL-HUDHAYL: Abū Al-Hudhayl Muḥammad Ibn Al-Hudhayl Al-'Allāf (135/752-235/849), leader of the Mu'tazilah of Baṣrah at this time, an astute dialectician, he is credited with the formulation of the five fundamental principles of the school, and commanded respect from the Abbasid caliphs, Al-Ma'mūn, Al-Mu'taṣim and Al-Wāthiq. Among his students was Ibn Abī Dāwūd, the powerful minister of the Abbasids.

ABŪ HURAYRAH: Abū Hurayrah (d. 58/678) was the greatest narrator of *ḥadīth*. He narrated, according to a very cautious recent study, 1,236 *aḥādīth*. (See Muṣṭafā A'ẓāmī, *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1977), p. 26.)

ABŪ AL-ḤUSSAYN AL-BAṢRĪ: Abū Al-Ḥussayn Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Aṭ-Ṭayyīb Al-Baṣrī (d.480/1044) was a famous Mu'tazilī theologian and jurist. He settled in Baghdad where he died. His writings include *Al-Mu'tamad fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh* in jurisprudence, *Taṣaffuḥ al-Adillah fī Uṣūl ad-Dīn*, *Ghurar al-Adillah*, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Khamsah*, and *Al-Intiṣār fī ar-Radd 'alā ar-Rāwandī* in theology.

ABŪ KHAYTHAMAH: Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn Zubayr Abī Khaythamah (d. 279/892) was a famous scholar of *ḥadīth*, history and genealogy. He was born in Nasā' and settled in Baghdad. He studied *ḥadīth* with Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā Ibn Mu'īn, and wrote a great biographical work called *At-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, which the famous scholar of *ḥadīth*, Ad-Daraquṭnī, held in great esteem.

ABŪ MŪSĀ: 'Abdullah Ibn Qays Ibn Salīm Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī, an eminent Companion, was born in Zabid in Yemen in 602 C.E. He came to Makkah and embraced Islam and took part in the battles. The Prophet (peace be on him) appointed him governor of Yemen. He was also appointed governor of Baṣrah and Kūfah by the later caliphs, 'Umar and 'Uthmān. He served on the tribunal

appointed to decide the feud between 'Alī and Mu'āwīyah. He died in Kūfah in 44/665. He narrated 355 *aḥādīth*.

ABŪ SA'ĪD AL-KHUDRĪ: Abū Sa'īd Sa'd Ibn Mālik Ibn Sinān Al-Khudrī (d.74/893) was a Companion of the Prophet (peace be on him) from the Khazraj tribe of Madinah. He was one of those who served the Prophet (peace be on him) from time to time. He participated in twelve battles and narrated 1,170 *aḥādīth*.

ABŪ SHAMAH: 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Ismā'īl Ibn Ibrāhīm, commonly known as Abū Shama (599/1202-665/1267) was historian, a Shāfi'ī jurist and a grammarian from Damascus. He is the author of *Ar-Rawḍatayn fī Akhbār ad-Dawlatayn*, *Al-Murshid al-Wajīz ilā 'Ulūm al-Kitāb al-'Azīz*, *Ibrāz Al-Ma'ānī fī Sharḥ ash-Shāṭibīyyah*, and *Al-Bida' wa al-Ḥawādith.*

ABŪ ṬĀLIB: Abū Ṭālib 'Abd Manāf Ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib Ibn Hāshim, an uncle of the Prophet, who looked after him after his father and grandfather died, loved him like one of his sons, let him preach Islam freely, and protected him from the evils that the leaders of the Quraysh might have done to him. He did not, however, embrace Islam, and died in the eighth year of the Prophet's call.

ABŪ ṬĀLIB AL-MAKKĪ: Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Ibn 'Aṭī'ah Al-Ḥārithī Abū Ṭālib Al-Makkī (d. 386/996), an ascetic and Ṣufī, was born in Al-Jabal between Baghdad and Wāsiṭ. He lived most of life in Makkah, where he delivered sermons and achieved fame. He then went to Baṣrah, and from there to Baghdad, where he expoused some strange ideas which the people disapproved of and they therefore refrained from attending his sermons. He was the author of a very popular work on Ṣufism, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, from which Imām Al-Ghazālī drew heavily in writing his *Iḥyā 'Ulūm ad-Dīn*.

ABŪ 'ŪWĀNAH: Abū 'Ūwānah Al-Waḍḍāḥ Ibn 'Abdullah (d. 186/802) was a war captive from Juyan who was brought to Baṣrah where he distinguished himself as a very reliable narrator of *ḥadīth*.

ABŪ YŪSUF: Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Ḥabīb Al-Anṣārī (113/731-182/798), the foremost disciple of Abū Ḥanīfah, who, along with Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥassan Ash-Shaybānī, contributed most to the development of Ḥanafī *fiqh*. He was also well versed in *ḥadīth* and *maghāzī*. Scholars such as Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā Ibn Mu'īn narrated *aḥādīth* from him. He served as *qāḍī al-quḍāt* (chief judge) during the reigns of Al-Mahdī, Al-Hādī and Hārūn Ar-Rashīd. He was the author of *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, a great work on government revenues, and *Adab al-Qāḍī*. He was born in Kūfah and died in Baghdad.

AL-AKHṬAL: Ghayāth Ibn Ghawth Ibn As-Salaṭ Al-Akhṭal (d. 90/708), one of the three top poets in the Umayyad period, was

born in Ḥīrah in Iraq, joined the Umayyad court and wrote odes in their praise. A collection of his poetry has been published.

'AMMĀR IBN YĀSIR: 'Ammār Ibn Yāsir Al-Kanānī (d. 37/657) was one of the earliest Companions to embrace Islam. He built the first Islamic mosque at Quba', was appointed governor of Kūfah by 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, joined the army of 'Alī and was killed at the battle of Ṣiffīn.

AL-ĀMIDĪ: Sayf ad-Dīn Abū Al-Ḥassan 'Alī Ibn Abī 'Alī Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Salīm At-Taghlibī Al-Āmidī, a jurist, *uṣulī* and theologian, was born in Āmid in 551/1156. He went to Baghdad and from there to Syria and then to Cairo. He became famous for his learning and students flocked to him. Out of envy, some scholars attributed wrong ideas to him and then attacked him, whereupon, he left Egypt and went to Damascus where he died in 630/1233. His writings include *Al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām*, and *Muntahā al-Uṣul*, concerning legal theory, and *Ghāyat al-Marām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām* in theology.

'ĀMR IBN 'UBAYD: Abū 'Uthmān 'Āmr Ibn 'Ubayd (80/699-144/761) initiated, along with his brother-in-law Wāṣṣil Ibn 'Aṭā' (d. 131/748), the Mu'tazilī theology. 'Āmr was known for his devotion and asceticism. He was born in Baṣrah and died on the way back from a trip to Makkah. His writings include a collection of the comments of Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣrī on the Qur'ān and a book on divine unity and justice.

AL-'AYNĪ: Badr ad-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Al-'Aynī (d. 855/1451), a renowned scholar of Ḥanafī *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, *uṣūl*, history and grammar, and a prolific writer, was born in Kaykin, brought up in 'Ayntab, learned from scholars in Ḥalab and Quds, and settled in Cairo, where he lectured, gave fatawa and served as chief judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*). His writings include, among others, a voluminous commentary on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Al-Bukhārī, a commentary on *Kanz ad-Daqā'iq* on Ḥanafī *fiqh*, and *'Aqd al-Jumān*, concerning history.

'Ā'ISHAH: *Umm al-Mu'minīn* 'Ā'ishah bint Abī Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq, a great narrator of *ḥadīth*, a distinguished jurist and very knowledgeable in Arabic history and literature, was married to the Prophet (peace be on him) in the second year after the Hijrah, and of all his wives she was most dear to him. She was not happy with the latter part of 'Uthmān 's rule, but when he was killed she led the campaign calling for avenging his blood. This led her to the Battle of the Camel against 'Alī. The last years of her life she passed quietly and she died in 58/678. The number of *aḥādīth* she narrated reaches 2,270.

'ALĪ IBN ABĪ ṬĀLIB: 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, a cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet (peace be on him), one of the three earliest Muslims, the fourth caliph, and a great scholar of the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*. He died in Kūfah in 40/660.

AL-ANBĀRĪ: Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Al-Qāsim Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Bashār Al-Anbārī (271/884-328/940) was a scholar of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, a man of letters and a grammarian. He came from Al-Anbār, a city near the Euphrates River in Iraq. His writings include *Al-Kāfī* in grammar, *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* in *ḥadīth*, and *Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id as-Sab'ah aṭ-Ṭiwāl* and *Al-Aḍḍād* in literature.

AL-ASH'ARĪ: Abū Al-Ḥassan Al-Ash'arī (260/873-324/935), founding head of the Ash'arī school of theology, was in his early career a pupil of the famous Mu'tazilī theologian Al-Jubbā'ī. However, at the age of forty he realized that the Mu'tazilī theology was in conflict with the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Therefore, he gave it up and developed a new theology which, thanks to the works of some great thinkers and writers in the following centuries, became the dominant ideology of the Muslim world. Al-Ash'arī expounded his ideas in many books, the most important of which are *Al-Ibānah* and *Al-Luma'*. His *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* is the most authentic history of early Islamic theology. For the quote above from that work, see the edition by H. Ritter, op cit., pp. 155-156.

AL-AWZĀ'Ī: Abū 'Āmr 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Āmr Al-Awzā'ī (88/707-157/774) was the imām of the Syrians in *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*. He first lived at Al-Awzā' in Damascus, then moved to Beirut where he died. He composed a book on *ḥadīth*, and his *fiqh* dominated Spain up to the time of Al-Ḥakam Ibn Hishām (d. 207/822).

AYYŪB AS-SAKHTIYĀNĪ: Abū Bakr Ayyūb Ibn Abū Tamīmah Kīsān As-Sakhtiyānī (66/685-131/748) was a great narrator of *ḥadīth* and a leading *faqīh* famous for his piety and ascetic living, has narrated about 800 *aḥādīth*. He was based in Baṣrah.

AL-BAGHAWĪ: Abū Muḥammad Al-Ḥussayn Ibn Mas'ūd Ibn Muḥammad Al-Baghawī (436/1044-516/1122) was the auuthor of Sharḥ as-Sunnah and a voluminous commentary on the Qur'ān, *Ma'ālim at-Tanzīl*, besides many other books.

AL-BĀJĪ: Abū Al-Walīd Sulaymān Ibn Khalaf Al-Bajī (d. 474/1081), a Spanish scholar of *ḥadīth* and a Mālikī jurist and judge, was born in Beja and died in Almeria, Spain. (See Al-Zarkalī, *Al-'Alām*, vol. III, p. 125). His abridged edition has been mentioned by Dr. Saghīr Ḥassan Ma'ṣumī, ed., *Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā' li Imām Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1391/1971), p. 39.

AL-BALKHĪ: Abū Muṭī' Al-Ḥakam Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Balkhī (d. 199/814) was one of the most distinguished students of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. The famous *ḥadīth* scholar 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak had great respect for his *fiqh* and piety. Cf. Adh-Dhahabī, *Mizān Al-'Itidāl*, 1:574.

AL-BAQILLĀNĪ: Qāḍī Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Aṭ-Ṭayyīb Al-Baqillānī (d. 403/1013) was one of the most outstanding Ash'arī theologians. He was born in Baṣrah in 338/949, settled in Baghdad where he died. His writings include *At-Tamhīd fī ar-Radd 'alā al-Malaḥadah Al-Mu'aṭṭlah*, *Al-Inṣāf*, *Kashf Asrār al-Bāṭinīyyah* in theology, and *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* on the inimitability of the Qur'ān.

AL-BAYHAQĪ: Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn Al-Ḥussayn 'Alī Al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) was a leading scholar of *ḥadīth* from Khurasan. His works include *As-Sunan al-Kubrā* (Hyderabad, 1352 A.H.), *Al-Asmā' wa as-Ṣiffāt* [ed. by Muḥammad Zāhid Al-Kawtharī (Cairo: Dār As-Sa'ādah, 1358)] and *Dalā'il an-Nubūwwah* [ed. by Dr. 'Abdul-Muṭī' Qala'jī (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmīyyah, 1405/1985)]. The latter is the work referred to in the commentary.

AL-BAZZĀR: Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn 'Āmr Ibn 'Abdul-Khāliq Al-Bazzār (d. 292/905) was a great scholar of *ḥadīth* and the author of a *Musnād* collection of *aḥādīth*. Al-Haythamī has collected his additional *aḥādīth* under the title *Kashf al-Astār 'an Zawā'id Al-Bazzār* (ed. Ḥabīb Ar-Raḥmān Al-A'zamī; Beirut: Mu'assasat Ar-Risālah) in four volumes. Al-Bazzār was from Baṣrah. He lectured on *ḥadīth* in Baghdad, Isfahan and Damascus. He died at Ramlah.

BILQĪS: Bilqīs was the name given to the Queen of Sheba who ruled over Yemen when Solomon (965-926 B.C.) ruled over Palestine and the neighboring area in the north. She is referred to in the Qur'ān, 27:22-44.

BISHR AL-MARĪSĪ: Bishr Ibn Ghayāth Al-Marīsī (d. 218/833), a Ḥanafī jurist from Baghdad and the titular head of the Marīsī school of Mu'tazilah theologians, used to vehemently defend the Mu'tazilī thesis that the Qur'ān is created.

AḌ-ḌAḤḤĀK: Abū Al-Qāsim Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk Ibn Muzāḥim Al-Balkhī Al-Khurāsānī (d. 105/723) was an outstanding commentator on the Qur'ān and a great teacher. He maintained a school which had 3,000 students. He wrote a commentary on the Qur'ān. He died in Khurasan.

AD-DARĀNĪ: Abū Sulaymān 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Aḥmad Ibn 'Aṭī'ah Ad-Darānī (d. 215/830) was a renowned Ṣufī was from Darān, a village in the suburbs of Damascus. He is recorded to have said, "Gnosis is that you do not aspire to anything in the world

except the One." (See Jāmi', *Nafaḥāt al-Uns*, Lucknow: Nawalkishore, 1910, p. 40).

AD-DĀRIMĪ: Abū Sa'īd 'Uthmān Ibn Sa'īd Ad-Dārimī As-Sijistānī (200/815-280/894) was the leading scholar of *ḥadīth* during his time and the compiler of *Sunan Ad-Dārimī.* He was also the author of a work on the refutation of the Jahmīyyah whose author was the Mu'tazilī theologian, Bishr Al-Marīsī. This work was included in *'Aqā'id as-Salaf*, ed. by 'Alī Sāmī Nasshār and 'Ammār Jāmi' Aṭ-Ṭālibī (Alexandria: Al-Ma'ārif, 1971), pp. 253-566.

ADH-DHAHABĪ: Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn 'Uthmān Adh-Dhahabī (673/1274-748/1348), a great scholar and critic of *ḥadīth* and a distinguished historian, Turkish by origin, he was born in Damascus and died there. He was the author of about a hundred books, the most important of which are *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ* (four volumes), *Mizān al-'Itidāl fī Naqd ar-Rijāl* (three volumes), *Tajrīd Asmā' As-Ṣaḥābah* (two volumes), *Al-Mustadrak 'alā Mustadrak* Al-Ḥākim in *ḥadīth*, and *Duwal al-Islām* (two volumes), *Tārīkh al-Islām Al-Kabīr* (thirty-six volumes) in history, and *Siyar A'lām An-Nubalā'* (twenty-three volumes) in biography.

AḌ-ḌUḤḤĀK: Ibn Al-Qāsim Aḍ-Ḍuḥḥāk Ibn Muzāḥim (102/720), a scholar of the Qur'ān, was a student of Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr, rather than of Ibn 'Abbās.

AL-FAZĀRĪ: Tāj ad-Dīn Al-Fazārī (d. 690 A.H.), known as Al-Firkah, was originally from Egypt but was known for his life in Damascus. According to Ibn Kathīr, he was known for being knowledgable in many different fields.

AL-GHAZĀLĪ: Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī (450/1058-550/1111) is known as ḥujjat al-Islām for his profound criticism of Greek philosophy and the defense of Islamic faith. He was born at Ṭūs, studied *fiqh* and *kalām* with Imām al-Ḥaramayn Al-Juwaynī, took up teaching at the Nizāmīyyah College in Baghdad, later gave that up and pursued a Ṣufī *ṭarīqah*, and finally settled in his home town and devoted himself to writing and teaching. His writings include many books on Shāfi'ī *fiqh*, a great work on the principles life under the title *Iḥyā 'Ulūm ad-Dīn*, which is his magnum opus, a profound criticism of Greek philosophy, *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah*, a brilliant exposition of Ash'arī theology, *Al-Iqtiṣād fī al-I'tiqād*, and many books on Ṣufism. Al-Ghazāli's writings, however, are not free from undesirable philosophical and mystical influences.

AL-HAMADHĀNĪ: Abū Al-'Alā Al-Ḥassan Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Al-Ḥassan (d. 569/1173) was an expert in Qur'ānic studies, an outstanding narrator and a scholar of *ḥadīth* at Hamadhān.

AL-HAMADHĀNĪ: Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Abī 'Alī Al-Ḥassan Ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Hamadhānī (d. 531/1137) was an ascetic and devotee. He was also a great scholar of *ḥadīth*.

ḤAMMĀD IBN ZAYD: Abū Ismā'īl Ḥammād Ibn Zayd Ibn Dirham (98/717-179/795) was a great narrator of *ḥadīth* who was born in Baṣrah to a family of Iranian origin. All six compilers of *ḥadīth* have accepted his reported *aḥādīth*.

ḤAMMĀD IBN SALĀMAH: Abū Salāmah Ḥammād Ibn Dinār (d. 167/783) was a man of letters, a renowned grammarian of the Baṣrah school, and an outstanding narrator of *ḥadīth*. He was known for his worship and devotion.

ḤASSĀN IBN THĀBIT: Ḥassān Ibn Thābit Ibn Al-Mundhir (d. 54/674), the poet of the Prophet (peace be on him) from the Khazraj tribe of the Anṣār, defended Islam through his poetry. His Diwān (collection of poems) has been published. The verse quoted here was mentioned by Al-Mubarrad in *Al-Kāmil fī al-Lughah wa al-Adab* (Beirut: Maktabat Al-Ma'ārif, n.d.), pp. 9-10.

AL-HARWĪ: Abū Ismā'īl 'Abdullah Ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Al-Anṣārī Al-Harwī (396/1005-481/1088) was a scholar of *ḥadīth*, a Ḥanbalī jurist, an outstanding Ṣufī and the author of a short and concise but very popular text on mystical stages, *Manāzil as-Sā'irīn*, which has been commented upon by many scholars including Ibn Al-Qayyīm, whose three volume commentary, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, seeks to review Ṣufī concepts and practices in the light of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and lives of the Elders. Among Al-Harwī's other works, we have *Al-Farūq fī aṣ-Ṣifāt* and *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*. He was born in Qandhar and died in Ḥirat, in Afghanistan.

AL-ḤASSAN AL-BAṢRĪ: Abū Sa'īd Ibn Al-Ḥassan Ibn Yāsir Al-Baṣrī (21/642-110/728), an eminent Successor, a great scholar, a prolific narrator of *ḥadīth*, a commentator on the Qur'ān, a jurist, preacher and ascetic, was the most outstanding personality of his time. Fearless in his criticism of wrong governmental practices, he had hot exchanges with the notorious Umayyad governor, Al-Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf, who could not cause him any harm. He was born in Madinah and died in Baṣrah.

ḤUDHAYFAH: Abū Abdullah Ḥudhayfah Ibn Hisl Ibn Jābir Al-Yamān Al-'Abassī (d. 36/656) was a Companion of the Prophet (peace be on him) famous for his chivalry. He had the distinction that the Prophet (peace be on him) had informed him of the names of the hypocrites. He took part in various battles during the reign of 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, who appointed him governor of Al-Madā'in where he died.

AL-ḤUMAYDĪ: Abū Bakr ‘Abdullah Ibn Al-Zubayr Ibn ‘Īsā Al-Qarshī Al-Ḥumaydī, (d. 219/834) was the compiler of the *Musnād Al-Ḥumaydī,* ed. by Ḥabīb Ar-Raḥmān Al-‘Azamī (Madinah: Al-Maktabah As-Salafiyyah, n.d.).

IBN ‘ABBĀS: ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās, a cousin of the Prophet (peace be on him), one of the two most eminent scholars of the Qur’ān among the Companions, the fourth most prolific narrator of *ḥadīth*, and a distinguished jurist. His expositions of Qur’ānic verses form part of every commentary on the Qur’ān; however, many comments that are attributed to him are not genuine. For the words that are quoted above in the text, see Al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak ‘alā aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn fī al-Ḥadīth* (Hyderabad, India, 1341 A.H.; reprint Riyadh: Maktabat An-Naṣr Al-Ḥadīthah; henceforth referred to as Al-Ḥākim), vol. 2, p. 381; ‘Abdur-Razzāq Ibn Hammām Aṣ-Ṣan‘ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, ed. by Ḥabīb Ar-Raḥmān Al-‘Azamī (Beirut: Al-Maktab Al-Islamī, 1391/1971), *ḥadīth* no. 6033.

IBN ‘ABDUL-BARR: Shaykh al-Islām Abū ‘Umar Yūsuf Ibn ‘Abdullah Ibn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr (368/978-463/1071), a distinguished scholar of *ḥadīth*, an eminent Mālikī jurist and historian came from Cordoba in Spain. His writings include *Al-Istī‘āb fī Ma‘rifat al-Aṣḥāb* (a biographical work on the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him), *At-Tamhīd limā fī al-Muwaṭṭa min al-Ma‘ānī wa al-Asānīd* (a commentary on Imām Mālik’s *Muwaṭṭa*), *Jāmi‘ Bayān Al-‘Ilm wa Faḍlihi,* and others.

IBN ABĪ AL-HADID: ‘Izz ad-Dīn Abū Ḥāmid Ibn Hibat Allah (d. 655/1257) was a man of letters and a poet. He was born in Al-Mada’in. Later he moved to Baghdad where he served in the government, becoming a close friend of the vizier Ibn Al-‘Alqamī. He is famous for his commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

IBN ABĪ SHAYBAH: Abū Bakr ‘Abdullah Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Al-Qāḍī Abū Shaybah (d. 235/849) was a leading scholar of *ḥadīth* from Kufah. He was the author of *Al-Muṣannaf fī al-Aḥādīth wa al-Athar* (Mukhtar Aḥmad An-Nadwī, ed.; Bombay: Dār As-Salafiyyah, 15 volumes), a *Musnād* and other books.

IBN AL-‘ALĀ: Abū ‘Āmr Zabān Ibn ‘Alā Ibn ‘Ammār At-Tamīmī, a man of letters and one of the seven leading reciters of the Qur’ān, was born in Makkah in 70/689, brought up in Baṣrah and died in Kūfah in 154/767.

IBN ‘ĀQĪL: Abū Al-Wafā‘ ‘Alī Ibn ‘Āqīl Ibn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Āqīl (431/1040-513/1119) was a great scholar of *fiqh*, *uṣūl* and *kalām* from Baghdad. He was the leader of the Ḥanbalīs in his time. His writings include an encyclopaedic work, *Kitāb al-Funūn, Al-*

Fuṣūl, *Kifāyat al-Muftī* on Ḥanbalī *fiqh*, and another work on the principles of jurisprudence.

IBN AL-'ARABĪ: Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Muḥammad, commonly known as Ibn Al-'Arabī, was a scholar of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* as well as a Mālikī jurist and scholar of history. He was born in Ishbiliah, Spain in 468/1085. He served as a judge in the same city. He died in 543/1148 in Al-Adwa in the East and was buried in Fās. His writings include *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, *Al-Masālik fī Sharḥ Muwaṭṭa Mālik*, and *Al-Qawāṣim wa al-'Awāṣim*.

IBN 'ARABĪ: Abū Bakr Muḥiy ad-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Aṭ-Ṭa'ī, commonly known as Ibn 'Arabi/Ibn Al-'Arabī, (560/1165-638/1240), was born in Murcia (Spain) and died in Damascus. A mystic of vast learning, great intellect and fertile imagination, he expounded and elaborated the philosophy of *waḥdat al-wujūd* that dominated the Islamic world for centuries and still exercises considerable influence. For his biography, see Sayed Husayn Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Harvard, Cambridge, 1964), pp. 92-102. The best work on his philosophy is by Dr. A. E. 'Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Dīn Ibnul Arabī* (Lahore: Ashra, reprint from C.U.P.

IBN AL-ATHĪR: Majd ad-Dīn Abū As-Sadāt Al-Mubārak Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Al-Athīr Al-Jazrī (d. 606/1209) is famous for his *Jāmi' Al-*Uṣūl *fī aḥādīth ar-Rasūl* [ed. by 'Abdul-Qādir Al-Aranawūṭ (Maktabah Al-Ḥalwānī and Maktabah Dār Al-Bayān, 1389/1969)] in which he put together the *aḥādīth* of Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, At-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, An-Nasā'ī and the Muwaṭṭa of Mālik, as well as for a lexicon on *ḥadīth*, *An-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wa al-Athar* [ed. by Ṭāhir Aḥmad Al-Zawī and Maḥmūd Muḥammad At-Tanjī (Cairo: Al-Maktabah Al-Islamīyyah, 1383/1903)].

IBN HAMSHADH: Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Hamshadh (d. 388/998) was a scholar of *ḥadīth*, a Shāfi'ī jurist and ascetic who came from Nishapur.

IBN ḤAZM: Abū Muḥammad 'Alī Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Sa'īd Ibn Ḥazm (384/994-456/1064), a man of letters and a poet, Zāhirī in *fiqh*, rationalist in theology, and a historian of theology, was born in Cordoba to a family whose ancestors were Iranian. His writings include *Al-Muḥalla,* in *fiqh*, *Al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām*, in principles of jurisprudence, and *Al-Fasl fī al-Milal wa al-Ahwā' wa an-Niḥal*, in theology.

IBN KATHĪR: Abū Al-Fidā' Ismā'īl Ibn 'Āmr Ibn Kathīr (700/1301-774/1372), a commentator on the Qur'ān, scholar of *ḥadīth*, jurist and historian, was born in Jandal in the province of

Baṣrah and then moved to Damascus where he died and was buried near the grave of his teacher, Ibn Taymīyyah. Among his writings mention may be made of a very popular commentary of the Qur'ān, entitled *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, a voluminous work on history, *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah*, a summary of Ibn Ṣalāh's *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth, Kutub al-Hudā fī Aḥādīth al-Masānid wa as-Sunan,* and *At-Takmīl fī Ma'rifat ath-Thiqāt wa adh-Dhu'afā wa al-Majāhīl.*

IBN KULLĀB: Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullah Ibn Sa'īd Ibn Kullāb Al-Qaṭṭān (d. ca. 240/854), was the leader of the Ahl as-Sunnah in his time. His followers were later absorbed into the Ash'arīs. [See Al-Maqdisī, *Aḥsan at-Taqāsīm* (Leiden: 1885), p. 37.

IBN MĀLIK: Abū 'Abdullah Jamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Mālik Aṭ-Ṭā'ī, a grammarian and man of letters, was born in Jayan in 600/1203, and settled in Damascus where he died in 672/1273. His works include *Khulaṣat al-Alfīyyah, Tashīl al-Fawā'id* and *Shahāhid at-Tawḍīh.*

IBN MAS'ŪD: Abū Ma'bad 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/652) was one of the first six to embrace Islam; he served the Prophet for many years. He was the most knowledgeable Companion of the Qur'ān. 'Umar Al-Fārūq, the second caliph, sent him to Kūfah to teach the Qur'ān, where he also served as a judge and was in charge of the government treasury.

IBN AL-MUBĀRAK: Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Al-Mubārak (118/736-181/797) was a famous scholar of *ḥadīth.* He traveled a great deal and collected *aḥādīth.* He lived off of trade, participated in *jihād* and gave generously for the sake of Allah. He compiled a collection of *aḥādīth* on *jihād* and another on *ar-riqāq* ('words that soften the heart'). He was born in Marwa and died in Hit, near Ar-Raqqah in Iraq.

IBN Al-QAYYĪM: Shams ad-Dīn Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Ayyūb, commonly known as Ibn Al-Qayyīm, an eminent scholar of the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, principles of jurisprudence, and a great writer, was born in Damascus, studied with his great teacher Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyyah for sixteen years, and established himself as his most distinguished disciple, expounding his ideas and developing his thought. His writings include *Zād al-Ma'ād* (a famous work on the life and practice of the Prophet), I'lām al-Muwaqqā'in in jurisprudence, *Shifā' al-'Alīl fī Masā'il al-Qaḍā' wa al-Qadr wa al-Ḥikmat wa at-Ta'līl,* in theology, and *Madārij as-Sālikīn* (a commentary on the Ṣufī text *Manāzil as-Sā'irīn* by 'Abdullah Al-Anṣārī Al-Harwī, reviewing the whole gamut of Ṣufī practice, experience and thought and expounding the *sulūk* of the Salaf.

IBN RUSHD: Abū Al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Rushd, the great Spanish jurist, judge and philosopher, was born in Cordoba in 520/1126 and died in Morocco in 595/1199. He commented upon the works of Aristotle and was known as "the Commentator of the Middle Ages". His writings include a very popular work on comparative *fiqh*, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid wa Nihāyat al-Muqtaṣid*, a refutation of Al-Ghazāli's refutation of philosophy, *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*, and an exposition of his own method in theology, *Al-Kashf 'an Manāḥif al-Adillah fī 'Aqā'id al-Millah*.

IBN SĪRĪN: Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Sīrīn Al-Anṣārī (d. 110/728), a very distinguished Successor, a great narrator of *ḥadīth*, and a *faqīh*, was known for his piety and devotions.

IBN 'UMAR: 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (d. ca. 74/693) was one of the most outstanding younger Companions. He was a learned scholar who was known for his piety and strict imitation of prophetic precepts. He also distinguished himself as a narrator of *ḥadīth*, second only to the most prolific narrator, Abū Hurayrah.

'IKRIMAH: Abū 'Abdullah 'Ikrimah, a Berber slave of Ibn 'Abbās, freed after the death of his master by the latter's son, 'Alī, distinguished himself as a scholar of the Qur'ān. Ash-Sha'bī said about him, "There is no one on earth more knowledgeable about the Book of Allah than 'Ikrimah." See Adh-Dhahabī, *At-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn* (Cario: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Ḥadīthah, 1396/1967), vol. 1, p. 111.

IMRA' AL-QAYS: Imra' Al-Qays Ibn Ḥajar Ibn Al-Ḥārith from the tribe of Kindah is generally held to have been the most eminent poet of pre-Islamic Arabia. He was killed in 545 C.E.

ISḤĀQ IBN RAHAWAYH: Abū Muḥammad Isḥāq Ibn Ibrāhīm Rahawayh (161/778-238/952), the most distinguished scholar of *ḥadīth* and law of inheritance (farā'iḍ) in Khurasan of his time. Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, At-Tirmidhī and other scholars of *ḥadīth* have all reported from him.

JA'D IBN DIRHAM: Ja'd Ibn Dirham (d. 118/736) was the teacher of Marwān Ibn Muḥammad, governor of Iraq during the reign of Hishām Ibn 'Abdul-Malik. He also influenced the views of Al-Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān, founder of the Jahmīyyah school of theologians. Ja'd believed that man had no free will, that the Qur'ān is created, that Allah did not speak to Moses, and that Allah did not take Abraham as an intimate friend. On account of these blasphemies, Khālid Al-Qasrī, the governor of Iraq, executed him.

JAHM IBN SAFWĀN: Abū Maḥraz Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān, the leader of the Jahmīyyah, was born in Khurasan, lived his early years in Tirmidh, entered into a debate with some Buddhists which

lead him to complete skepticism. After forty days he regained faith in God but, towing the line of Ja'd Ibn Dirham, he denied that God had attributes over and above His Essence. He also denied freedom of will and the eternity of Paradise and Hell. He was killed along with Al-Ḥārith Ibn Surayj in a battle against the Umayyads. See Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Umām wa al-Mulūk* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā At-Tūrath Al-'Arabī, n.d.), vol. 7, pp. 220-221, 236-237.

AL-JAWZIJĀNĪ: Abū 'Alī Al-Jawzijānī was a disciple of Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Al-Ḥākim At-Tirmidhī (d. 216/831) in taṣawwūf. He was a comtemporary of Junayd Al-Baghdādī (d. 297/909).

AL-JAWĀRIBĪ: Dāwūd Al-Jawāribī was a Rafiḍī and an anthropomorphist. He believed that God was a body, though not solid within. See Adh-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, entry 2661; Al-Ash'arī, *Maqalāt*, p. 209; Al-Baghdādī, *Al-Farq bayn al-Firaq* (Beirut: Dār Al-Āfāq Al-Jadīdah, 1393/1973), p. 320.

AL-JUWAYNĪ: Abū Al-Ma'ālī 'Abdul-Mālik Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Juwaynī (419/1028-478/1085), commonly known as Imām al-Ḥaramayn, an erudite scholar, an eminent Shāfi'ī jurist and the most distinguished Ash'arī theologian of his time, hailed from Juwayn, a small town in the vicinity of Nishapur in Iran. His works on theology include *Kitāb al-Irshād* (a classic of Ash'arī theology), *Ash-Shāmil fī* Uṣūl *ad-Dīn* and *Al-'Aqīdah an-Niẓāmīyyah* (his last word on the subject).

AL-KHALLĀL: Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Harūn Ibn Yazīd Al-Khallāl (d. 310/922) was a leading scholar of *ḥadīth* and a Ḥanbalī *faqīh* at Baghdad.

AL-KHUNJĪ: Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn Namawar Ibn 'Abdul-Mālik Al-Khunjī (590/1194-646/1248) was an Iranian scholar of *fiqh*, logic and philosophy. He was appointed judge in Cairo where he settled and later died. His writings include *Khasf al-Asrār fī Ghawāmiḍ al-Afkār* and *Al-Mujiz fī al-Asrār in logic*, *Al-Jumal,* summarizing the *Nihayat al-'Amal* of Ibn Mārzūq At-Tilimsānī.

AL-KHUSRUSHĀHĪ: 'Abdul-Ḥāmid Ibn 'Īsā Al-Khusrushāhī (580/1184-652/1254) was a Shāfi'ī jurist, theologian and philosopher. He was born at Khusrushah, a town in the vicinity of Marwa. He was a student of Fakhr ad-Dīn Ar-Rāzī. After Ar-Rāzi's death, he went to Syria where he taught and wrote. He then went to Al-Kark and joined the company of Al-Malik An-Nāṣir. Finally he went to Damascus where he later died. His writings include an abridgement of *Kitāb ash-Shifā'* by Ibn Sīnā, an abridgement of *Al-Muhadhdhab* in *fiqh*, and *Tatimmah al-Ayāt al-Bayyināt*.

LABĪD: Labīd Ibn Rabī'ah Ibn Mālik Al-Amīrī was one of the seven top poets of pre-Islamic Arabia. He embraced Islam at the hand of the Prophet (peace be on him) and later settled in Kūfah where he died in 41/661. His *Diwān*, poetry collection, has been published and translated into German.

AL-LAYTH IBN SA'D: Abū Al-Hārith Al-Layth Ibn Sa'd (94/713-175/791) was the most famous scholar of Egypt of his time and an eminent *faqīh*. Ash-Shāfi'ī said that he was a better faqih than Mālik. It is unfortunate that he did not have students like those of the other masters to develop his *fiqh*. He was born in Khurasan, and served as a *qāḍī* in Cairo, where he died.

AL-LALKĀ'Ī: Abū Al-Qāsim Ḥibbatullah Ibn Al-Ḥassan Ibn Manṣūr Aṭ-Ṭabarī Al-Lalkā'ī (d. 418/1027), was a scholar of *ḥadīth*, a Shāfi'ī jurist and a theologian. He was originally from Iran but settled in Baghdad and died in Dinawr. His writings include *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, *Madhāhib Ahl as-Sunnah*, *Kitāb Rijāl aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, *Karamāt al-Awliyā'*, and others.

AL-MAKKĪ: 'Abdul-'Azīz Ibn Yaḥyā Ibn 'Abdul-'Azīz Al-Makkī (d. 240/854), a disciple of Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī, visited Baghdad during the time of Al-Mā'mūn (198/813-218/833) where he had a debate with the Mu'tazilī theologian, Bishr Al-Marīsī on the issue of whether or not the Qur'ān is created. *Al-Ḥidah* (edited by Jamīl Ṣaliba; Damascus, 1384/1964) which is attributed to him contains a refutation of the Mu'tazilī viewpoint. Adh-Dhahabī doubted that it was his work [see *Mizān Al-'Itidal*, ed. by 'Alī Aḥmad Al-Bajawī (Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifah), 2:639), and his student, As-Subkī, agreed with his assessment (see *Ṭabaqāt Ash-Shāfi'īyyah al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifah, second edition), vol. 2, p. 145.

MĀLIK IBN ANAS: Mālik Ibn Anas Ibn Mālik (d. 179/795), founder of the Mālikī school of *fiqh*, was the leader of the *muḥaddithūn* of Madinah during his time. His famous work, *Al-Muwaṭṭā*, is a collection of *aḥādīth* containing also the statements of Companions and Successors and forms the basis of the *fiqh* he developed. A book on theology, *Ar-Risālah fī al-Qadr wa ar-Radd 'alā al-Qadarīyyah,* has been attributed to him, but its authenticity is doubtful.

MĀLIK IBN DINĀR: Abū Yaḥyā Mālik Ibn Dinār Al-Baṣrī, a famous narrator of *aḥādīth*, lived a simple and ascetic life earning his livelihood by copying the Qur'ān. he died at Baṣrah in 131/748.

Al-MĀTURĪDĪ: Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Maḥmūd Al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), from a village near Samarqand, was an erudite scholar and leader of the orthodox theologians in the East.

He developed *kalām* on the lines of Abū Ḥanīfah. His books include *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, *Kitāb Tawilat al-Qur'ān,* and *Awhām al-Mu'tazilah*.

MU'ALLA: Abū Ya'lā Mu'alla Ibn Manṣūr (d. 211/826) was a student of the great Ḥanafī Imāms, Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad Ash-Shaybānī. He was an eminent jurist in his own right. He passed on their works and views. He also narrated *aḥādīth*, and was respected for his piety.

MU'ĀWĪYAH: Mu'āwīyah Ibn Abī Sufyān Sakhr Ibn Ḥarb Ibn Umayyah was the founder of the Umayyad dynasty and a great administrator. He embraced Islam in 8 A.H., when Makkah was conquered. As a scribe of the Prophet (peace be on him), he wrote down Qur'ānic revelations. He served as governor of Jordan at the time of 'Umar and of all of Syria at the time of 'Uthmān. When 'Alī became the caliph, he did not submit to him. This led to the Battle of Ṣiffīn. After 'Alī, Alī's son Al-Ḥassan handed over the caliphate to Mu'āwīyah in 41 A.H. Mu'āwīyah continued to rule until his death in 60/680.

MU'ĀDH IBN JABAL: Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal Ibn 'Āmr Ibn Aws Al-Anṣārī (d. 18/639) was a great Companion of the Prophet from the Khazraj tribe of Madinah. He participated in all the battles of Islam beginning with Badr. The Prophet (peace be on him) appointed him *qāḍī* in Yemen. He narrated 157 *aḥādīth*, died in Jordan and was burried in Al-Qasir.

MUḤAMMAD IBN AL-ḤASSAN: Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥassan Ibn Farqad Ash-Shaybānī (131/748-189/864), the most distinguished disciple of Abū Ḥanīfah, second only to Abū Yūsuf, was born in Wāṣit and spent his early years in Kūfah where he joined the company of Abū Ḥanīfah. Later, he moved to Baghdad and was appointed judge. He died in Ar-Rayy. Ḥanafī *fiqh* owes more to him for its development than to anyone else. His works include *Al-Mabsūṭ* (a compendium of *fiqh*), *As-Siyar* (in international law), *Al-Ḥujjah 'alā Ahl Al-Madīnah*, *Al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr*, and *Al-Jāmi' as-Saghīr*.

MUJĀHID: Mujāhid Ibn Jubayr Al-Makkī (21/642-104/722) was the most eminent student of the great commentator on the Qur'ān and Companion, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās. His comments on the Qur'ān have been collected and published with notes under the title *Tafsīr Mujāhid* by 'Abdur-Raḥmān At-Tahim Muḥammad As-Suratī (Islamabad, Pakistan: Majma' Al-Buhūth) in two volumes.

MUQĀTIL: Abū Al-Ḥassan Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān Ibn Bashīr (d. 150/767), a distinguished commentator on the Qur'ān, was originally from Balkh and settled in Baṣrah. His writings include

Nawādir at-Tafsīr, *Mutashābiḥ al-Qur'ān*, *An-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh* (all regarding the Qur'ān) and *Ar-Radd 'alā al-Qadarīyyah* (in theology). See Al-Zarkalī, *Al-A'lām*, 7:281.

MUṬARRIF: Abū 'Abdullah Muṭarrif Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Ash-Shikhkhīr Al-'Āmrī (d. 87/706), was a great Successor. He was born during the time of the Prophet (peace be on him), went to Baṣrah where he settled and where he died. An ascetic in life, he is considered a reliable narrator of *ḥadīth*.

AN-NAKHA'Ī: Ibrāhīm Ibn Yazīd Ibn Qays Al-Aswad An-Nakha'ī (46/666-96/715) was one of the most eminent Successors. He distinguished himself as a *faqīh*; in fact, he developed a *fiqh* of his own, and was known as the *faqīh* of Iraq. He lived in Kūfah.

AN-NASAFĪ: Abū Al-Mu'īn Maymūn Ibn Muḥammad An-Nasafī (d. 580/1184) was an eminent theologian of the Māturidī school. His writings include, among others, *At-TamhīdliQawa'īd at-Tawḥīd* and *Tabṣirat al-Adillah*. A commentary on the former has been written by Ḥusām ad-Dīn Ḥussaynī Ibn 'Alī Al-Ḥanafī.

AN-NASAFĪ: Abū Al-Barakāt 'Abdullah Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Maḥmūd An-Nasafī (d. 710/1310) was an eminent scholar of *ḥadīth*, a Ḥanafī jurist, a legal theorist and a commentator on the Qur'ān. His writings include *Madārik at-Tanzīl wa Ḥaqā'iq At-Tawīl* in Qur'ānic exegesis, *Al-Kafī fī Sharḥ al-Wāfī* and *Kanz ad-Daqā'iq* in *fiqh*, and *Manār al-Anwār* in legal theory. The latter became very popular and many scholars wrote commentaries on it.

NEGUS: The Negus who ruled over Abyssinia at the time of the Prophet (peace be on him) and whose real name was Ashamah welcomed the Muslims who left Makkah and took shelter in his country when they were being persecuted by the pagans of the Quraysh tribe. The Negus was convinced of Islam, and embraced it. He died in the 8th year of the Hijrah when Makkah was conquered. The Prophet (peace be on him) offered the funeral prayer in absentia at his death. (See Ibn Hajar, *Al-Isābah fī Tamyīz aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, Cairo: Al-Maktabah Ash-Sharqīyyah, 1325/l909, 1:117).

NU'AYM: Abū 'Abdullah Nu'aym Ibn Ḥāmmad Al-Khuza'ī (d. 228/842) was to first to collect *aḥādīth* in the form of a *musnad*. At first he lived in Iraq and Hijaz, but then he settled in Egypt. His words quoted here were mentioned in Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah*, ed. by Dr. Aḥmad Sa'd Haddan (Riyadh: Dār At-Tayyibah; henceforth referred to as Al-Lalka'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*), under *ḥadīth* 936.

AL-QABISĪ: Abū Al-Ḥassan 'Alī Ibn Khalāf Al-Qabisī (d. 403/1012) was a Mālikī jurist and a scholar of *ḥadīth*.

QĀḌĪ 'AYĀḌ: Qāḍī Abū Al-Faḍl 'Ayāḍ Ibn Mūsā (476/1083-544/1149) was a scholar of *ḥadīth* and a man of letters, born in Sibtah in Spain and died of poisoning in Morocco. Among his works the most famous is his work on the life of the Prophet, *Ash-Shifā' fī Ta'rīf Ḥuqūq Al-Muṣṭafā*.
QATĀDAH: Abū Al-Khaṭṭāb Qatādah Ibn Ḍ'amah (d. 118/736), a man of extraordinary memory, was the most distinguished narrator of *ḥadīth* in Baṣrah.
QUDĀMAH: Abū 'Āmr Qudāmah Ibn Maẓ'ūn Ibn Wahb (d. 36/656), a cousin of 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb and one of the earliest Muslims, migrated to Abyssinia along with his brothers, 'Uthmān and 'Abdullah Ibn Maẓ'ūn. He participated in all the battles beginning with Badr. 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him governor of Bahrain. The incident mentioned here is reported by 'Abdur-Razzāq As-San'ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 17076, as well as by Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 9:546.
AL-QURTUBĪ: Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Abī Bakr Al-Anṣārī Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272), the great commentator of the Qur'ān, was born in Cordova, Spain. Besides his Qur'ānic commentary, *Al-Jāmi'liAḥkām al-Qur'ān*, which became very popular, he also compiled *Al-Asnā' fī Sharḥ Asmā' Allah al-Ḥusnā*, and *At-Tadhkirah fī Ahwal al-Mawta wa Umūr al-Ākhirah*. The words that follow occur in vol. 1, pp. 302-304 of the *Tadhkirah* (Aḥmad Hijazī As-Saqqa, ed., Beirut: Al-Maktabah Al-'Ilmīyyah, 1402/1982).
AL-QUSHAYRĪ: 'Abdul-Karīm Ibn Hawāzin Al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), a disciple of Abū 'Alī Ad-Daqqāq (d. 405/1014) in Ṣufism, is famous for his *Ar-Risālah*, which is the most authentic and comprehensive introduction to Ṣufī practices, experiences and concepts as developed by the early Ṣufīs. He also had a commentary on the Qur'ān, *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt*, and other books.
RABĪ'AH: Abū 'Uthmān Rabī'ah Ibn Abī 'Abdur-Raḥmān Farrūkh (d. 136/753), commonly called Rabī'ah Ar-Rā'īy because of his use of personal judgement in law, was a reliable transmitter of *ḥadīth*. Imām Mālik, who was his student in jurisprudence, said at his death, "Thus has passed away the real taste of *fiqh*." [Adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'*. vol. 6, p. 89.
AR-RĀZĪ: Fakhr ad-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar Ibn Al-Ḥussayn Ar-Rāzī (544/1149) was a great Ash'arī theologian, philsopher, writer of a great commentary on the Qur'ān (*Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, commonly known as *At-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*), a Shāfi'ī jurist and legal theorist. Besides the *Tafsīr*, his writings include many books, such as *Sharḥ Ishārāt Ibn Sīnā*, *Al-Maṭālib al-'Alīyyah* in philosophy,

Al-Arbā'īn and *Ma'ālim Uṣūl ad-Dīn* in theology, and *Al-Maḥṣūl* in legal theory.

AR-RUZBĀRĪ: Abū 'Alī Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Al-Qāsim Ar-Ruzbārī (d. 322/934) was a noted Ṣufī mentioned by Al-Qushayrī in his *Risālah*. He was born in Baghdad, learned *taṣawwūf* from Junayd and An-Nūrī, and settled in Egypt where he died.

AṢ-ṢĀBŪNĪ: Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'īl Ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān Aṣ-Ṣābūnī (373/983-449/1057), a leading scholar of *ḥadīth* in Khurasan, was equally versed in Arabic and Persian. He died at Nishapur. Among his works, the most famous is *'Aqīdat as-Salaf wa Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth*.

AS-SAHRUWARDĪ: Sheikh Shihāb ad-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar Ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amwayh (539/1144-632/1234) was the founder of the Suhrawardī order of Ṣufīs. He was the chief Ṣufī saint (*shaykh ash-shuyūkh*) in Baghdad in his time. His preceptor in *sulūk* was his uncle, Abū Najīb As-Suhrawardī (d. 563/1168). His most famous work was *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, a very popular work among mainstream Ṣufīs.

SA'ĪD IBN AL-MUSAYYIB: Abū Muḥammad Sa'īd Ibn Al-Musayyib (13/634-94/713) was a great scholar of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* and one of the seven renowned jurists of Madinah. He is hailed as the Leader of the Successors (Sayyīd aṭ-Ṭabī'īn). He was an authority on the judgements of 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, and was known for piety and simple living. He died in Madinah.

ASH-SHĀFI'Ī: Muḥammad Ibn Idrīs Ibn Al-'Abbās Ash-Shāfi'ī (150/767-204/819), the founder of the Shāfi'ī school of *fiqh*, was born in Syria, brought up and educated in Makkah, studied *fiqh* with Imām Mālik in Madinah and with Imām Muḥammad Ash-Shaybānī in Iraq, and settled in Egypt in 199/814, where he developed his own school of *fiqh*. His *Risālah*, which enunciates the basic principles of his jurisprudence, underlines the importance of *ḥadīth* in *fiqh*, while *Al-Umm* enshrines his *fiqh* in detail. (See Al-Zarkalī, *Al-'Alām*, vol. 6, p. 26.

ASH-SHAHRISTĀNĪ: Abū Al-Fatḥ Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdul-Karīm Ibn Aḥmad Ash-Shahristānī, a famous historian of theology, was himself a distinguished theologian and philosopher. He was born in Sharistan, a place between Nishapur and Khawarizm, in 467/1074. He went to Baghdad in 510/1116 and stayed there for three years. He then returned to his own city where he died in 548/1153. He two most famous works are *Al-Milal wa an-Niḥal*, in history of theology, and *Nihāyat al-Iqdām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām*, in theology.

SHARĪK: Abū 'Abdullah Sharīk Ibn 'Abdullah An-Nakha'ī (d. 177/793) was a narrator of *ḥadīth* and a jurist who was appointed judge in Kūfah by the Abbasid ruler, Al-Manṣūr. Sharīk was vehemently opposed to innovations; on the other hand, he was lax in narrating *ḥadīth*. That is why some scholars of *ḥadīth* were not prepared to accept *aḥādīth* which are not reported by anyone other than him. See Adh-Dhahabī, *As-Siyar*, 8:37.

ASH-SHIBLĪ: Abū Bakr Ibn Jaḥdar Ash-Shiblī (247/861-334/946), a disciple of Junayd, was the leading Ṣufī of his time in Baghdad. In the early part of his career he was extremely emotional and ecstatic. His *shaṭḥāt* and deificatory words, some of which As-Sarrāj has explained (*Al-Lumā*, ed. 'Abdul-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, and Ṭāha 'Abdul-Baqī Surūr, Cairo: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Ḥadīthah, 1380/1960, pp. 478-81), come from this period; in practice, however, he observed the Shari'ah except on some occasions when he was deeply intoxicated. Later on, he became sober and proved to be a great Ṣufī sheikh.

SHU'BAH: Shu'bah Ibn Al-Ḥajjāj Ibn Al-Warad Al-'Anṭakī (82/701-160/776) was an outstanding scholar of *ḥadīth* in Baṣrah. He was one of the founders of the science of *jarḥ wa ta'dīl*. He wrote a book called *Gharā'ib fī al-Ḥadīth*. See Al-Zarkalī, *Al-A'lām*, 3:242.

SUFYĀN ATH-THAWRĪ: Abū 'Abdullah Sufyān Ibn Masrūq Ath-Thawrī (97/716-161/778) was called the Leader of the Believers in *ḥadīth*. He was born and brought up in Kūfah. He refused to accept the post of judge offered by Manṣūr. He left Kūfah in 144/761 and lived in Makkah and Madinah. Among his books are two collections of *ḥadīth*, one large and one small.

SUFYĀN IBN 'UYANAH: Abū Muḥammad Sufyān Ibn 'Uyanah Ibn Maymūn (107/725-198/814) was born in Kūfah but settled in Makkah where he died. A well-known transmitter of *ḥadīth*, he left a collection, *Al-Jāmi'*, and a book on *tafsīr* (Al-Zarkalī, *Al-A'lām*, 3:159).

AṬ-ṬABARĪ: Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī (224/839-310/923), a great historian, an eminent jurist of the rank of *mujtahid*, and an outstanding commentator on the Qur'ān, was born in Tabaristan and settled in Baghdad, where he died. His commentary, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, is the greatest commentary available to us that is based on the tradition of the Elders. No less outstanding is his work of history, *Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk*. He is also the author of *Tahdhīb al-Athar*, *Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā'* and *Adab al-Quḍāt*.

AṬ-ṬAYĀLISĪ: Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān Ibn Dāwūd Ibn Al-Jarūd Aṭ-Ṭayālisī (d. 203/818), a renowned scholar of *ḥadīth*, the author of a *musnād* and other works, hailed from Baṣrah.

AT-TUSTARĪ: Abū Muḥammad Sahl Ibn 'Abdullah At-Tustarī (d. 283/897) was from Tustar in the Persian province of Khawzistan, where he taught Islamic sciences and instructed others in Ṣufism before he went to Baṣrah and settled there. He was known for his abstinence, renunciation, fasting throughout the year, and miracles. Walter De Gruyter has studied his commentary on the Qur'ān in *The Mystic Vision of Existence in Classical Islam* (Berlin and New York: 1980).

UMM SALAMAH: *Umm al-Mu'minīn* Umm Salamah Hind bint Abī Umayyah Ibn Al-Mughīrah was one of the earliest Muslims. She migrated to Abyssinia along with her husband, Abū Salamah, where the latter died. She was later married to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), whom she joined in Madinah in 4 A.H. She died in 59 A.H.

'UMAR IBN Al-KHAṬṬĀB: 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (?/583-24/644) was the greatest Companion of the Prophet (peace be on him) after Abū Bakr. He succeeded the latter as caliph, defeated the Persian and Roman empires, extended the rule of Islam from Iran to Egypt, and carved out the institutions of the new government and society. He is known for his profound knowledge of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, and for creative insight into *fiqh*.

AL-UMAWĪ: Yaḥyā Ibn Sa'īd Abban Ibn Sa'īd Ibn Al-'Āṣ Al-Umawī was a scholar of *ḥadīth* and a reliable narrator. He died in Kūfah in 194/810.

UMAYYAH IBN ABĪ AṢ-ṢALAT: 'Abdullah Ibn Abī Aṣ-Ṣalat Ibn Abī Rabī'ah Ath-Thaqafī was a famous poet of Ṭā'if. He heard about the Prophet (peace be upon him) but did not believe in him. It is narrated that when some of his poems were read to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said, "His tongue believes but his heard denies." According to Al-Albānī, that story is not authentic. (Muḥammad Nāṣr ad-Dīn Al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth aḍ-Ḍa'īfah*, no. 1546.) See Ibn Qutaybah, *Ash-Shi'r wa ash-Shu'rā* (Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, ed.; Cairo: Dār Al-Ma'ārif, n.d.), p. 459.

WAHB IBN MUNABBAH: Abū 'Abdullah Wahb Ibn Munabbah (d. 110/782), from Sanaa, was an honest and reliable transmitter of *ḥadīth*. He also narrated a lot of Jewish traditions, and he is credited with a book on the history of the Kings of Ḥimyar.

AL-WARRĀQ: Maḥmūd Ibn Ḥassan Al-Warrāq (d. ca. 225/840) was a poet, mostly composing edifying poems. Ibn Abī Ad-Dunya quoted from him in his works and Al-Mubarrad noted some of his lines in his *Al-Kāmil*.

WĀṢIL IBN 'AṬĀ': Abū Ḥudhayfah Wāṣil Ibn 'Aṭā' (80/699) was a man of letters and an orator who initiated the Mu'tazilī movement in theology. He was born in Madinah and brought up in Baṣrah. He was in the circle of Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣri's students, but on the issue of the status of one who commits a grave sin he left him (*i'tazla 'anhu*), thus giving the name of *i'tizāl* to his movement. He sent his colleagues to various parts of the Abbasid caliphate - Kūfah, Khurasan, Armenia and Morocco - to preach the ideas of the school. He is also credited with writing a work on the Qur'ān, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, and some on theology, *Aṣnāf al-Murji'ah*, *As-Sabīl ilā Ma'rifat al-Ḥaqq* and *Al-Khutab fī at-Tawḥīd.*

YŪSUF IBN ASBĀṬ: Yūsuf Ibn Asbāṭ was a Ṣufī of the third century Hijrī, known for his asceticism. A number of his aphorisms are quoted by Adh-Dhahabī (*Siyar*, 9:50) and Abū Nu'aym (*Al-Ḥilyah*, vol. 8, pp. 237 ff.)

AZ-ZĀHIDĪ: Abū Ar-Rajā' Najm ad-Dīn Mukhtar Ibn Maḥmūd Ibn Muḥammad Az-Zāhidī (d. 658/1260) was a great Ḥanafī jurist from Ghaznin in Khawarizm. He was the author of *Qunyat al-Munyah li Tatmīm al-Bughyah*. He gave this name to this work because he based it on the book, *Munyat al-Fuqahā'*, by his teacher, Fakhr ad-Dīn Bādi' Ibn Abī Manṣūr Al-Ḥanafī. The *Qunyah* has not been published yet. (See Hajī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, pp. 1357, 1886).

AZ-ZAMAKHSHARĪ: Abū Al-Qāsim Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar Az-Zamakhsharī (467/1075-5381146), a great man of letters, a poet and grammarian, a staunch Mu'tazilī, is famous for, more than anything else, his commentary on the Qur'ān, *Al-Kashshaf 'an Ḥaqā'iq wa Ghawāmid at-Tanzīl*. This work is usually published along with the critical comments of Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Al-Munīr Al-Iskandarānī (d. 683/1284) who refuted its Mu'tazilī doctrines. Al-Zamakhsharī was born in Zamkhar in Khawarizm, went to Baghdad, and from there to Makkah where he lived many years. He finally returned to Khawarizm where he died.

AZ-ZAYLA'Ī: Jamāl ad-Dīn 'Abdullah Ibn Yūsuf Ibn Muḥammad Az-Zayla'ī (d. 762/1360), a Ḥanafī jurist and *uṣulī* and a scholar of *ḥadīth* was born in Zayla' in Somalia and died in Cairo. His *Nasb ar-Rāyah fī Takhrīj Aḥādīth al-Hidāyah* is a work on the *aḥādīth* referred to in the famous work of Ḥanafī *fiqh*, *Al-Hidāyah*.

Az-ZUHRĪ: Muḥammad Ibn Muslim Ibn 'Ubaydullah Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Shihāb Az-Zuhrī (51/671-124/721) was a man of extraordinary memory and the most outstanding scholar of *ḥadīth* among the Successors. He is considered the "first" to compile the Sunnah. He also wrote a book on the life of the Prophet (peace be

upon him) that has recently been published. He was born and brought up in a Qurayshī family in Madinah and he later settled in Syria where he died.

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